



President: Mr. Ismat KITTANI (Iraq)

AGENDA ITEM 8

General debate (*concluded*)

1. The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will hear an address by Mr. Ahmed Sékou Touré, President of the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea. On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome him to the United Nations and to invite him to address the Assembly.

2. Mr. SÉKOU TOURÉ (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this important Assembly. I am convinced that thanks to your qualities as a skillful diplomat, the results of this session will fully respond to the noble aspirations of peoples to peace, freedom, justice and well-being for one and all.

3. I am fully aware of the gravity and the importance of this special session on disarmament, and of course I have no intention of playing the part of a professor of morals in this matter. Because of the importance and the gravity of this session, everyone has the duty to make a frank and sincere contribution to its work.

4. I shall limit myself, as others have already done, simply to drawing the attention of the Assembly to the grave threat that the unbridled arms race poses to all mankind. A threat? It seems to me that this is not the exact word to describe it, because I greatly fear that the machinery for gradually exterminating man is already a sad and tangible reality.

5. Indeed, is there an honest person who is not increasingly alarmed about the negative consequences, already disastrous in many areas, of this frantic race being carried out at the expense of the lives of all the peoples of the world? It is doubtful that such a person exists, for if he did the internal light that God has given us would already have been extinguished. This is not a problem which concerns the nuclear Powers alone; rather, it is a whole set of concerns about which no statesman of our era can be indifferent.

6. I state—and the Assembly too knows this—that the arms race is squandering more than 6 per cent of the gross domestic product of all the States of our planet.

7. I state, with a deep sense of sadness, that this harmful waste on means with which to destroy our planet is absorbing at least a third of the gross national product of the countries of which I am one of the representatives—that is to say, the countries afflicted

with extremely serious economic and social problems. These countries live in conditions of chronic famine, ignorance and insecurity in the areas of hygiene and health.

8. I am speaking here on behalf of 600 million human beings dying of malaria and malnutrition. I am speaking of 1.5 billion people without shelter or exposed to pollution by their environment. I am speaking of more than one fourth of the children of the world who are cut off from the paths of learning and the road to development.

9. This session is taking place at a time when the international situation is very alarming in several respects. Whether in Africa, Latin America, Asia or the Middle East, hotbeds of tension are increasingly becoming real threats to all mankind. Those hotbeds of tension, generally found in the so-called third-world countries, are fed by the arms industries, for which they are major markets in which the arms trade can flourish.

10. Although disarmament is primarily a matter for the industrialized countries, it can never be exclusively their concern. There is in the developing countries a grotesque contrast between military expenditures and the resources devoted to development, education, health and culture. Allegedly for security reasons, those countries spend millions, if not billions, of United States dollars to arm themselves every year.

11. Those sums, which flow into the bank accounts of the arms industry, are used, unfortunately, to purchase weapons with which we kill each other. The militarist Powers' appetites for domination, exploitation and oppression have made distrust the rule in international relations.

12. We all know that while the nuclear-weapon stockpiles of some countries are capable of destroying our world several times over, world food stocks are insufficient and starving populations are the victims of diseases of all kinds.

13. In a document entitled "Famine in Africa", prepared jointly by the Organization of African Unity [OAU] and FAO, extremely disquieting statistics are given. According to that document, the annual per capita rate of food production is declining constantly. It is estimated that approximately 50 per cent of the surface of the African continent is covered by desert or by regions affected by desertification. Each year the Sahara is spreading south at an alarming rate.

14. While hundreds of thousands of the world's scientists are using their knowledge in the search for ever more sophisticated and deadly weapons, in the developing countries 30,000 to 40,000 children die of hunger and disease every day.

15. Many speakers have already expressed from this rostrum their views on what should be done to protect non-nuclear States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests; on effective measures to prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction; on the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa;¹ on the necessary link between disarmament and development, and so on.

16. It is no exaggeration to say that in the four years since the first special session on disarmament there has been a serious deterioration in the situation. It has been shown that expenditures on armaments now exceed the appalling figure of \$500 billion a year.

17. An expert report establishes clearly that military expenditures are among the least profitable of the burdens shouldered by States. They swallow up funds that could be used to relieve poverty, while the very nature of military expenditures heightens tensions and insecurity. Thus it is becoming more and more clear that the accumulation and growth of military forces are not a solution to the problem of the security of nations.

18. We all know that international peace and security can be achieved only through trust and co-operation among States; in an atmosphere of freedom for all peoples and of general détente in international relations.

19. The North-South global negotiations remain blocked, and in the General Assembly the debate is bogged down in procedural questions.

20. Can billions of dollars be squandered every year on weapons while a billion men, women and children can neither read nor write and live below the threshold of poverty? Can we permit the perpetuation of the incongruity of a world in which 1.5 billion inhabitants of the low-income countries are without enough to eat?

21. The nations of the third world suffer terribly from diseases which have disappeared from the industrialized countries. Malaria continues to kill a large number of people and to enfeeble others so that their productivity is reduced. Trachoma is very easy to cure, but if it is not treated its victims go blind, making their life a burden and making them a burden on society. Leprosy makes its victims outcasts from society. Yaws, a nutritional deficiency disease, produces festering sores on the bodies of its victims, so that they cannot work or play, and can barely even rest. Those are the four great endemic diseases that place a very heavy burden on the third world every year in terms of economic losses and human suffering.

22. But instead of wiping out those scourges certain Powers direct their efforts to the search for means of mass destruction in order to put the future of the human race in jeopardy.

23. More than a billion persons living on an income of less than \$150 a year go hungry from the cradle to the grave, never in their lives knowing the meaning of happiness.

24. In his report entitled *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, Mr. Willy Brandt says:

“One half of one per cent of one year’s world military expenditure would pay for all the farm equipment needed to increase food production and approach self-sufficiency in food-deficit low-income countries by 1990.”²

This gloomy picture is not, unfortunately, a mere flight of fancy; it is a tragic fact that we either dare not face or do not want to face.

25. Yes, as I already said, the problem which is the subject of the discussions we are having here today in New York does not affect merely the great, so-called nuclear Powers, or candidates for membership in the club of the users of atomic fission technology for military purposes. Our developing countries are put in an unjust situation where we reap the fallout of this immoral, unbridled arms race.

26. I affirm that the socio-economic development of many developing countries is hindered by the mobilizing of partisan groups in various areas, whereas the only problems important for our future seem to some in our times to be problems of hungry throngs which deserve only a minimum of attention. But the Earth belongs to all mankind. In fact, it was created for all creatures to be sheltered together without distinction as to species, race, colour or any other form of discrimination emanating from the human brain, from the dust out of which man emerged in the universe.

27. One of the major causes of the world economic crisis, which is reflected in the iniquitous nature of international trade based on the exploitation of raw-material-producing countries by the industrialized countries, is clearly the war industry, which keeps billions of human beings destitute, arbitrarily deprived of the legitimate fruits of their labour, in conditions of hunger, disease, ignorance and poverty.

28. Even today there are many countries which are incapable of dealing even with the technological stage of simple assembly and whose industrial potential is thwarted because of the economic imbalance which jeopardizes their daily existence, countries which cannot carry out even their modest national programmes but remain dependent on foreign military technologies. This is not mere dependence on sources of supply, equipment or maintenance but is the result of the imposition of the rule of subordination to the policies of the supplier countries, however incompatible those policies may be with the positions or the human values of the importing countries.

29. It is a demonstrated fact that the effects of this race towards mass genocide organized or conducted by Satan are reflected in the tension in the relations between neighbouring States, the creation of hostile systems of alliance which disrupt the lives of nations, and in the preparation of zones of conflict between the existing political systems. Poverty and destabilization—that is what the industry of death costs us, the industry of products which are becoming more sophisticated and lethal every day.

30. We no longer need the views of any specialist in the study of war to know that the objective of war is occupation by the industrialized Powers of

countries with economic potential. Once those countries are occupied the masses revolt against the intruders and then the vicious circle of the destruction of human life and material goods is renewed.

31. Do we need to be intellectually blind and morally indigent to ignore the ecological fall-out of a nuclear war? The destabilization of the physiological properties of some organisms, the disappearance of biological species, the destruction of the protective layer of gas of the surface of our earth—that is the cost of ignoring the absolute need to give up the arms race.

32. What actually is threatening peace? It is the practice of colonialism, racism and *apartheid*, hegemonism, the downgrading of the fate of the so-called materially deprived peoples, total scorn for those peoples, the flouting of international laws which guarantee the right of every people to peace, security, and progress.

33. Unfortunately, and this is a fact, the resources which friendly countries earmark for Africa to help it out of its underdevelopment are most often used and designated by its leaders to increase their own military potential. To defend themselves against whom? The instability generated, whether by the arms merchants or by the contradiction between Governments and peoples, is a permanent feature of the lives of many States.

34. The African and Asian countries are not afflicted with congenital sloth, as is claimed. Actually, production in our countries shows a real increase in the per capita income of the inhabitants, but that increase is recklessly swallowed up in the criminal quest for weaponry. We have to look the truth in the face. We do not want to be considered marginal peoples any longer, peoples destined to labour for the enrichment of others, while at the same time we see our living standards steadily deteriorating.

35. We, the developing countries, speak of the establishment of a new international economic order, which we are constantly demanding. But how can this new international order be established if the implications and fall-out of the investments of the developed countries do not allow us to regulate our pace of development, particularly in agriculture, and if our national programmes are undercut by food shortages and trade indebtedness that defies common sense, and by the contagion of monetary chaos and the consequences thereof, such as the increase in unemployment, because the additional income is, paradoxically, used for the acquisition of military technology which, we must stress, changes rapidly.

36. Yes, our national economies are indeed fragile, for obvious historical reasons of which everyone is aware, but they are becoming increasingly fragile because of the concern of the great Powers to stabilize régimes which assign to military expenditure funds which should serve to raise the living standards of populations.

37. Countries legitimately seek to safeguard and consolidate their independence. To retaliate against aggression is legitimate, but has it been demonstrated fully that the capacity to retaliate is more closely linked to the possession of weapons than to the nature or the quality of the political and social systems established in countries?

38. Leaders take the view that harmony between them and their people can be achieved only by acquiring huge amounts of sophisticated weapons. But who prevents them from establishing democratic régimes? Who prevents them from exemplifying the noble aspirations of their peoples and working for social harmony through justice?

39. Today we also observe inclinations to absorb parts of territory, leading to very serious hostilities.

40. Finally, we must recognize that subservience to different blocs has led to the seeking of assistance from the big Powers by States which none the less are members of the non-aligned movement. That has had the result of making that movement a body lacking in initiative, obeying the will of forces foreign to its objective, which is to save mankind at any cost from confrontations which could lead to its annihilation, to guarantee peace and to work for the progress of all the nations of the world.

41. So what are we to do? Are we to consider our planet as a part of the universe which belongs to each and all of us, a part which we are here to build upon, to develop and to improve? Einstein and Fermi are no longer with us, but there is no doubt that they would have spoken the same language. Specialists today are doing everything they can to convince us that local wars do not have to become thermonuclear conflagrations.

42. It is the Powers that possess the military technology which are leading those countries unaware of the danger facing our planet down the path to perdition. The result is that local wars, alleged to be controllable, are clearly leading our peoples to generalized confrontations. Yes, generalized confrontations, because there are some who want our countries to align themselves with them and their will. And what do our poor countries gain from this situation? Dangerous tension in international relations, which diverts them from their objective of struggling against underdevelopment and introduces doubts about the sincerity of relations between States. Must man be so much the enemy of man that he fails to understand that the arsenals he has created are the means of his own destruction, if not of the loss of his moral sense?

43. We have gone so far as to create concepts which clash with that exceptional faculty that God himself gave us: the capacity for analysis, the capacity to perceive the universe and understand it. Today we talk of the balance of terror, of the force of deterrence. There is talk about equality of retaliation against this or that country. There is even talk about "intelligent" weapons! Is man losing confidence in himself, rebelling against God by working for the annihilation of God's human creatures and by taking the path of evil, the path which leads to the reduction of man to an animal state?

44. War, local though it may be in a given geographic area of the world, is always universal in scope. It is a breakdown of peace and of security which, by their essence, remain indivisible values. It disturbs the international relations of the countries at war. It is always a dominant factor in the current scene, a factor which, because of the contradictory comments about it, divides world public opinion.

45. War is raging in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia. Lebanon is under attack by Israel, and Angola by the Republic of South Africa. In Namibia, in Western Sahara, in Chad, in Afghanistan, in the Falklands (Malvinas), in El Salvador and elsewhere the fires of war have not been extinguished. Human lives are lost and property is destroyed. Violence continues and threatens the life of man and the well-being of society.

46. International forums remain indifferent or powerless. They do not manage to impose peace and international order.

47. Is the unhappiness of some the happiness of others? Is human feeling, this central faculty of man, diminishing at the very time when science has enabled man to conquer the moon and to master the oceans?

48. The General Assembly and the Security Council must act resolutely in the name of peoples and States to halt the genocide being practised today, to banish once and for all the language of arbitrary force and to work for the progress of freedom, peace, brotherhood and co-operation, the only things that can promote the solidarity and interdependence of the peoples of the world.

49. As First Vice-Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Chairman of the Islamic Committee for Peace, we welcome the cease-fire in the fratricidal conflict between Iraq and Iran, and we hope that peace and friendly co-operation will bring about harmony in the relations between those two countries.

50. We hope that the international forums will work in a dynamic spirit to halt the war in Lebanon and to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the conflicts between the State of Israel and the other States in the Middle East.

51. We hope that the OAU, which is today paralysed by an internal crisis, will demonstrate the political maturity necessary to strengthen its foundations, enhance mutual confidence among its member States and achieve a peaceful solution to the conflicts in Sahara and Chad.

52. There is no doubt that the Namibian people will soon achieve its national independence and full sovereignty over the soil of its native land.

53. We are convinced that the Republic of South Africa, by radically doing away with its racist policy and by dedicating its efforts to regenerating man, whatever the colour of his skin, could become reconciled with Africa and the democratic world and thereby could one day play a positive role in the economic development of the African continent.

54. Disarmament is related to all those problems of liberty, of independence, of good-neighbourly relations, of co-operation and of the development of our nations in a spirit of solidarity.

55. I hope I shall not be accused of being a metaphysician, but allow me to state that our era, if we consider even for a moment the stockpiles of weapons threatening to destroy our civilization and our planet, is one characterized by a major reversal of finalities. Man is becoming incapable of mastering his own creations, the very means whereby he has overcome

the elements of nature. Man has become the enemy of man. The mistaken quest for well-being has left him worse off and led to the destruction of reason.

56. The reign of material force dehumanizes and degrades man. Only the reign of the spirit of truth and of social justice and solidarity can bring about the fulfilment of man, who is essentially a social being, a being endowed with conscience and with reason.

57. It is time that differences ceased to be negations of our identity or our community. The human community, above and beyond the infinite diversity of colour, of race, of social régime, should be a united, free, prosperous entity characterized by solidarity thanks to the positive contributions of all peoples, united in a spirit of joint responsibility for peace.

58. The States called "the haves" have not only succeeded in involving many developing countries in the frenetic arms race in which they are engaged, but have also performed the ideological and political feat of gaining acceptance of that arms race as one of the components of the global balance, thus creating a feverish desire for sophisticated weapons, each country seeking to enrich its weapons arsenal by increasingly deterrent—that is, increasingly murderous—weapons.

59. In this vicious circle in which each State seems concerned only with its own survival, we are, oddly enough, managing to create the most favourable conditions for the unleashing and proliferation of local wars, consequences of which for our countries are from every point of view disastrous.

60. What, I ask, is that global balance in which the security of States is in fact becoming increasingly precarious? What kind of equilibrium is it that depends upon a fearsome accumulation of increasingly deadly weapons designed to exterminate the peoples of our planet through a gigantic conflagration? Paradoxically, the surer we are of destroying ourselves, the more secure we feel. It almost seems as though mankind were losing its reason.

61. Today international relations are becoming dangerously tainted by the spirit of evil, by the arms race.

62. We have become so deeply perturbed by this phenomenon that the leaders are no longer able to resort to the ideal means—which moreover are to hand—of resolving effectively the most serious problems that can arise for our peoples. I refer to dialogue, the quest for peaceful solutions in a dispassionate spirit, in the spirit of the love of mankind, the safeguarding of life, and the conscious choice of the just, the useful and the beautiful. Were those not the noble ideals that presided over the creation of the United Nations after the Second World War?

63. Specialists in economics are soothing their consciences and trying to give us a sense of security by referring to us as "developing countries". In fact, however, we are countries that are growing poorer day by day, for one of the major reasons for the growing gap between our countries and the developed countries is that immense resources are being allocated to creating nuclear arsenals, testing new weapons and even experimenting with them in local wars that destroy human life and property.

64. I believe I am well within the bounds of reason when I say that naked, inhuman materialism has so eroded our humanity that man today is capable of talking about conventional weapons. I challenge anyone here to prove to me that it is logical for people, before they have even begun to fight, to come together to agree on the way to exterminate themselves some day. What strange language that is. For us, it is an absurdity, a deception, indeed, a crime.

65. Unfortunately, the war mentality or the philosophy of war that justifies the primacy of might over right is the dominant feature in the behaviour of States and of men. The press and the cinema are daily disseminating notions that poison men's minds and lead them, indeed encourage them, to violence, to aggression, to contempt for the weak, in short, to social injustice.

66. The greatness of a State is measured by its destructive power, by the extent of its ability to do harm, and not by the just attitude it takes to international problems and the nobility of its ideas. How sad that mankind should suffer needlessly the evils of such a situation, which is contrary to international morality.

67. We are witnessing the quests for security through weapons rather than through international co-operation to satisfy the essential needs of our societies.

68. The great Powers must put an end to the arms race and must commit themselves resolutely to the true path of disarmament, to the effective employment of technologies for peaceful ends and for the socio-economic development of peoples, of all the peoples, without reservations and without self-interest.

69. All the peoples, especially the peoples of Africa and the other countries of the third world, need peace and disarmament and are basing their hopes on the results of this special session. As long ago as the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, we told this same forum that disarmament was a primary concern of the African continent, that our young and undeveloped States had a vital need for peace if they were to tackle the many problems facing them. We had a heavy heritage of several centuries of colonization that we had to overcome. To that end, we were obliged to mobilize all our resources, for our peoples aspired to freedom and a better life more than ever.

70. Peoples do not all have the same riches. Human beings do not all have the same attainments, the same capacities. Even so-called identical twins are different from each other if they grow up in different economic and social-cultural situations. We respect each person's capacity for free choice. In our view, each people must have a sense of responsibility. We do not wish to be anyone's clients—apart from the field of trade, where there are suppliers and clients. In the area of co-operation we wish to be equal partners. And that is why we are non-aligned and will remain so, for our aim is first and foremost to consolidate our country's independence, to enable our people to emerge from underdevelopment, to help Africa to become free and united on a basis of dignity, and to enter the international arena able to contribute usefully and not as a burden to others. We do not speak of non-alignment in terms of propaganda. It is a reality that we live. That is why we shall co-

operate with all those who wish to co-operate with us on a basis of mutual respect and joint responsibility and in conformity with international law, and the universal ethic—that is, the triumph of good over evil. It is high time that man remembered those on the path to progress.

71. The Soviet Union is proposing a suspension of the deployment of new generations of atomic weapons. The United States, for its part, is prepared to agree to discussions on the reduction of nuclear weapons. We sincerely encourage them to follow this course and not to put nuclear technology at the service of evil, to use it only for peaceful purposes that are subject to control, in order to prevent conversion of nuclear materials for warlike purposes. There is a further truth that I would venture to repeat: the danger of resort to nuclear weapons cannot be the concern solely of the nuclear-weapon States. This planet belongs to all of us. The countries of which we are a representative are certainly poor, but it has yet to be demonstrated that we are lacking in moral arguments, in ethical resources enabling us to point the way towards safeguarding the survival of our humanity. Our material poverty goes hand-in-hand with immense moral and spiritual wealth. Materially undeveloped—or, rather, non-developed—peoples are highly developed morally. They possess great spiritual values and great moral power which they have placed at the service of mankind as a whole.

72. The concept of civilization, the concept of development imply a state of social-human conscience and not a conquest of material riches by any means whatever. There is a permanent and growing internal and external balance that characterizes the well-being of man and the development of people. Human life is short. Let us all act together to ensure that it is lived in freedom, social peace and dignity. Let us act to eliminate the causes of suffering and strengthen in each man and in each nation confidence and hope in the future of the world.

73. In conclusion, I shall take the Assembly at its word by quoting this reflection by a nineteenth century German philosopher, "Each of us is a combination of all reasonable human beings". Members of the Assembly will agree with me that the arms buildup in certain countries is a sad reality of our time. We therefore invite them to work for the positive and radical transformation of that reality by halting the arms race and by converting existing stocks into material goods to be used for the greater prosperity and well-being of the peoples—all peoples, be they white, yellow or black.

74. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I thank the President of the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea for the important statement he has just made.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

NOTES

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Annexes, agenda item 105, document A/5975.*

² Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 1980), p. 19.