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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 29 September 1989, at 3.15 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. GARBA	(Nigeria)
later:	Mr. SAHLOUL (Vice-President)	(Sudan)
later:	Mr. VRAALSEN (Vice-President)	(Norway)

- Address by Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Collins (Ireland)  
Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)  
Mr. Savetsila (Thailand)  
Mr. Poos (Luxembourg)  
Mr. Velayati (Islamic Republic of Iran)  
Mr. Sahloul (Sudan)  
Mr. Kamikamica (Fiji)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. VIRGILIO BARCO VARGAS, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President BARCO VARGAS (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the people and the Government of Colombia please accept our congratulations and good wishes on your election, Sir, as President of the General Assembly. I am sure that you will preside with distinction over the deliberations of this body, which brings together the community of nations. Let me also associate myself with those who have already praised the splendid work done by your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo. In addition, may I pay tribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, towards achieving world peace.

This is the last time I shall address the General Assembly as President of Colombia. However, I am here today not only as President of my country but also as a citizen of the world.

(President Barco Vargas)

This is the last time I shall address the General Assembly as President of Colombia. However, I am here today not only as President of my country but also as a citizen of the world.

The terrible carnage of the Second World War gave birth to this body in the hope that nations standing together united could prevent the global madness of 50 years ago from ever happening again. Since then, in spite of the persistent efforts of the United Nations, mankind has continued to follow the destructive path of war in conflicts around the planet. Only the unimaginable devastating consequences of nuclear war have restrained us from falling once again into a world-wide conflagration.

Yet, in spite of the fragile armed peace thus generated, the world has remained at war. Conflicts generated by ideology, poverty, injustice, excessive ambitions, and now increasingly by narcotics, have scarred the peace.

Respect for national sovereignty underlies all our strategic thinking. Indeed, it is the basis for this United Nations. Yet now we find this newest threat, narcotics, and the accompanying terrorism that pays no respect to borders. We, the community of nations gathered here, find ourselves under assault from an international criminal enterprise that respects none of our norms of sovereignty, borders or laws.

To meet this new challenge we must avail ourselves of those core founding values of the United Nations. If we cannot act together in the face of this menace, then we will be abetting unrestrained growth in the use of drugs and the violence they generate.

I am certain that Colombia will defeat the drug traffickers. But if this effort is not accompanied by a global commitment, then no victory can be achieved.

The recent global outpouring of solidarity and support for Colombia has been a great encouragement to us in these difficult times.

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A new era is upon us, an era as critical as the one that led to the establishment of the United Nations. A new world war is being waged by an aggressor unrestrained by the traditional rules of engagement or by the responsibilities of national sovereignty. This aggressor is an insidious, global criminal network with enormous power and resources, a criminal enterprise that feeds on the illegal profits from the trafficking of drugs. As the Secretary-General states in his report to the Assembly this year,

"Illicit use and traffic of drugs is now recognized as a social plague afflicting both developed and developing countries. Although efforts to combat this scourge have intensified in recent years, estimates suggest that the monetary value of drug trafficking has recently surpassed that of international trade in oil and is second only to the arms trade. It is a chastening observation that humanity is so deeply mired in the commerce of degradation and death." (A/44/L, p. 23)

The members of these criminal cartels were born in many nations, and many of their leaders are called Colombian. But while some may have been born in my country let me be clear: they are Colombian in name alone. They are international fugitives on the run. They have no home. Colombia is not their homeland.

I am here today at the United Nations to lay out the stark realities of this war against drug trafficking. Colombia is on the front line of this battle. For us this is no war of words. In Colombia the casualties of our struggle have been mounting for some time. About one month ago we suffered the tragic assassination of one of our finest national leaders, Luis Carlos Galan. In many ways his death has galvanized our nation and focused the attention of the world on this problem. But our war on drugs has been taking its toll for years. We have lost 12 Supreme Court Justices, an Attorney General and a Minister of Justice. We have lost members of Congress, judges, mayors, scores of journalists, thousands of soldiers

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and policemen and tens of thousands of Colombian citizens who were committed to the cause of democracy.

Following my announcement last month of drastic measures using executive powers available under a state of siege, the traffickers in narcotics have continued to engage in a cowardly reign of terror. They have threatened and retaliated against innocent families; they randomly strike at our cities and have bombed institutions such as our newspaper El Espectador that dare to speak out clearly against organized crime.

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In their aim to protect their illegal activities, the drug traffickers seek to destroy the will of our people and undermine our most precious institutions. Hear me well - they will fail. Colombia, one of the oldest and most stable democracies in Latin America, will prevail and emerge from this new trial stronger yet.

In these past few weeks we have won some important victories. We are methodically breaking the back of the cartels, not just by confiscating and destroying many tons of cocaine: Colombian authorities actually capture almost 80 per cent of the cocaine seized in the world. But our offensive goes far beyond that. Those responsible for the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan have already been captured. Thousands of suspects have been apprehended and millions of dollars in property - processing plants, bank accounts, communications equipment, aircraft, boats, houses and ranches - have been seized.

But all these victories will not be sufficient to win this war. That is why I am here today. Only through concerted international action can we hope to defeat the scourge of narcotics. The drug cartels have declared total war. This declaration of war is against the entire community of nations, against those whose young people are being poisoned by drugs and against those who, like Colombia, see their democracy and their institutions threatened by violence and terrorism. There are no boundaries to the death caused by the narcotics conflict, there are no safe havens from narco-terror - and now, there must be no safe haven, anywhere in the world, for the narco-traffickers. In this war, the time has come for the community of nations to choose sides.

It may be difficult for many here to agree that this is a global war: they may see it as a scourge of this hemisphere alone. Many, in fact, do believe that cocaine is a scourge only of the Americas - produced in South America and consumed in North America. But that is not so, because, even as we meet here today, the

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tentacles of drug trafficking are reaching into Europe and the Far East. The aggressive search for new markets is no more respectful of oceans than it has been of borders. Wherever there are consumers there will be suppliers. And, indeed, cocaine is only one ugly manifestation of a much wider narcotics crisis. Make no mistake - this scourge touches us all.

In solidarity, as a community of nations, this should be our plan of action. First, we simply must effectively stop the demand for these illicit drugs. It is the insatiable demand for drugs that fuels narco-terrorism and is one of the greatest threats to democracy in Latin America. Those who consume cocaine are contributing to the assassination of my people by the criminal drug cartels. No doubt somebody a few blocks from this Hall, in one of this city's fashionable neighborhoods, taking his usual dose of cocaine in the civilized calm of his living room, would balk at this description. Yet as surely as if he pulled the trigger he is the slayer of those Colombian judges and policemen who have paid with their lives for trying to uphold the law and democracy.

Every tactic and every weapon in the war against narcotics pales into insignificance when compared to the need to reduce demand. The illegal profits produced by drug consumption are simply too great. I am sure that in Colombia we will defeat the drug traffickers, but someone, in some country, somewhere, will supply the drugs as long as the business remains so profitable. This happened in the case of marijuana: when it became too expensive for drug traffickers to operate in Colombia, because of effective law enforcement, they moved to California, Hawaii and other places. The only law that the drug traffickers do not break is the law of supply and demand.

No society, no matter how rich, can afford to have its sons and daughters poisoned by cocaine, heroin, marijuana or any other deadly drug. In this regard, President Bush's national drug control strategy is a first step in the right

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direction. We must insist on the message that illegal drugs are neither fashionable nor harmless, whether consumed at the glittering parties of the wealthy or in the ghetto. Drug users need to understand that in this war they are in the camp of the enemy, along with those who produce and push drugs. Let me take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate the initiative and leadership of the Prime Minister of Great Britain in her call for an international conference on the reduction of demand for narcotic drugs. Mrs. Thatcher has honoured me with her invitation, which I have accepted, to address the conference at its opening meeting next April.

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Secondly, our efforts to reduce the supply of cocaine also depend on international co-operation in stopping the illegal trade in chemicals which are essential to the processing of this drug. Generally, much attention is given to the production and processing of drugs; for example, too much emphasis has been placed on the cultivation of coca leaf in countries like Peru and Bolivia. Unfortunately, in contrast, little attention is given to controlling the supply of chemicals which are used to process cocaine and which come mainly from North America and Europe. None of them is manufactured in Colombia - all of those chemicals are smuggled into our country. Tightening controls on the manufacture and sale of those chemicals, as well as strengthening sanctions against their illegal shipment, must be one of our highest priorities. It takes more than coca leaf to produce cocaine. Without the needed chemicals there would be no narcotics. Let us exert pressure on the suppliers of those chemicals as firmly as we do on the poor peasant growers of coca leaf.

Thirdly, the weapons used by the drug cartels to intimidate, maim and kill my people are not manufactured in Colombia. They are found on the international arms market where even the most sophisticated weapons are easily and legally bought. Let us make no mistake about this: those who sell arms to the narco-terrorists are even more guilty than the addicts whose demand for drugs fuels violence. Last year Colombia presented a draft resolution calling for restrictions on arms sales, but unfortunately consensus could not be found at the United Nations. We can no longer wait while this deadly trade continues. It is essential to adopt special measures to reduce and control arms sales to drug traffickers and terrorists. I call on all the nations of the world to stop this madness and stop it now.

My Government also views with extreme seriousness the activities of foreign mercenaries in training and assisting narco-terrorists in Colombia. The international community must strengthen its condemnation of the murderous

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association of mercenaries with terrorists and drug traffickers. My Administration has not only condemned the presence of foreign mercenaries in our territory, it has also criminalized their activities and ordered their capture. These developments in Colombia make an urgent and indisputable case for this Assembly to approve the convention outlawing these criminal activities.

Fourthly, international co-operation is an essential element in efforts to halt money-laundering. The drug cartels depend on the international banking system for the transfer of funds. A significant part of the criminal profits is invested in the industrialized nations - in bank accounts and bonds, in properties and in legal businesses. Somehow our sense of justice is warped when a poor farmer who feeds his family by growing coca is seen as a greater villain than the wealthy international banker who illegally transfers millions of dollars of drug money that finances terrorist actions against innocent people. If the international banking system co-operates, we can in the short term make great progress in the fight against the drug traffickers.

Fifthly, each of us present here must press for the prompt ratification of the Vienna Convention. Painstakingly negotiated for many months, this Convention includes specific action on a wide variety of fronts, from penalties for consumption to seizure of ships on the high seas and confiscation of properties. Upon my return to Colombia, I shall introduce the Vienna Convention to the Colombian Congress for consideration and study. For this Convention to be effective, it must be ratified and implemented by the entire community of nations.

In addition, I wish to recommend to this Assembly two other multilateral initiatives: the first is to call a special session of this General Assembly addressed to all aspects of the global drug problem - consumption and production - which would consider urgent actions including those I am suggesting today; the second step - and perhaps the most important way of making concrete progress - is

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to establish an international working group at ministerial level, which would meet periodically to co-ordinate and refine specific anti-narcotics actions and to evaluate progress.

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Sixthly, central to political stability and maintenance of Colombia's democratic institutions is the strength of its economy. This is why international co-operation to maintain a strong and stable economy is so vital. In spite of the enormous destabilizing power of drug trafficking, Colombia has been able to remain firm in its will to fight that international criminal organization.

It is critical to note that our economy is not dependent on the income from this illegal drug trade. In Colombia, that money is concentrated in speculative real estate activity and in money laundering. Its contribution to the growth of our economy is marginal. Colombia is not - and will not be - a narco-economy.

Three years ago, I addressed the Assembly on the urgent need to fight absolute poverty. Since then, my Government has embarked on an ambitious programme of social change aimed at transforming the living conditions of regions traditionally excluded from the benefits of development. The results can already be seen.

In spite of the massive resources that the drug war requires, we will not relent in our pursuit of social change and economic progress. To that end, Colombia requires international and financial co-operation, but even more important is the adoption of commercial and trade measures which allow our economy greater access to markets in the industrialized countries and fair prices for our exports.

The prime example is coffee, the traditional and principal source of income for Colombian farmers. The International Coffee Agreement has recently collapsed, with the result that Colombia will lose more than \$400 million this year in income. Sixty-one developing countries stand to lose a total of \$5 billion in income next year.

We need the help of the United States and other countries to get the Coffee Agreement signed again. We cannot afford to talk idealistically of crop substitution in the case of the coca leaf while sabotaging Colombian farmers' main

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cash crop and the country's largest export. It is encouraging to note that President George Bush recently expressed his willingness to co-operate in finding solutions to the problems that led to the rupture of the Coffee Agreement. We expect that all other countries involved understand the seriousness of the situation and the need to revive one of the most successful examples of international economic co-operation.

The weakening of the commodities market only aggravates the debt crisis. Foreign debt is a heavy burden for Latin America and is hindering economic growth. What is even more important, it is worsening the conditions of poverty for millions of Latin Americans. We must work together to find realistic and effective solutions to this vital problem.

There is yet another - and related - struggle which has drawn the attention of the world and must be one of our highest priorities in the decade of the 1990s. It is, of course, the destruction of our natural resources and the deterioration of our environment.

As I said recently in Manaus, in the meeting of member countries of the Amazon Co-operation Treaty, the industrialized countries have an ecological debt to all humanity. In less than two centuries, not only have most of the native forests of Europe and North America been razed, but industrial production has brought pollution, acid rain and destruction to the ozone layer. This is an ecological debt to future generations of all the countries of the world who will have to live with the consequences of the mindless way in which the developed countries have handled their natural resources.

The way in which the industrialized nations can pay this debt is by directly contributing to third-world alternatives which preserve the environment, especially the tropical rain forests. I believe that these issues should be dealt with at the

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highest level of all Governments and of the United Nations. In Colombia we have already made progress in this respect. My Administration has already set aside more than 20 million hectares of rain forest and Indian reserves in the Amazon region, an area much larger than many European countries. Let us pledge to pay this debt for future generations.

If the narcotics problem were not a priority at this moment I would have spoken to the Assembly today about another war: the struggle of the developing countries to eliminate poverty and social injustice. We should not lose sight of these fundamental goals. I would also have spoken in detail about the many important development projects we are promoting, the most important of which for the international community is the proposal to build a land bridge to link the Pacific and Atlantic oceans through Colombian territory. The railroads, highways and pipelines to be built will provide vital new links for global shipping.

This is indeed a historic moment, and future generations will judge our actions. In this war on drugs there have been many heroes of many nationalities willing to give their lives. Many are well known, but even more are unknown. Luis Carlos Galan died because he dared to speak out. Guillermo Cano, the editor of El Espectador, was gunned down because he would not be silenced. The thousands of soldiers and Colombian citizens who have fallen have died because of their commitment to this struggle.

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These brave men and women have not died in vain. The entire community of nations must build on their sacrifice to defeat the curse of drugs.

The record of human history is strewn with the wreckage of failed civilizations. We now face a new and global threat. We must act now before it is too late. If we confront the narcotics menace with boldness and determination we can win. With international commitment and co-operation, we can make this plague of the twentieth century obsolete. It is my cherished hope that the school children of the twenty-first century will learn about drugs and about terrorism only from their history books - the history of great plagues that were eradicated.

We should be under no illusions about the burdens that lie ahead. Victory will take time. Winston Churchill might have been describing the road before us today when he told the House of Commons in 1940: "Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey, hardships our garment, constancy and valour our only shield. We must be united; we must be undaunted".

Let us declare today that together we shall use the last decade of this century to bury the international scourge of drugs. Together we can and must succeed.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the very important statement he has just made.

Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.\*

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\* Mr. Sahloul (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

## GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. COLLINS (Ireland): I extend to Ambassador Garba my sincere congratulations on his unanimous election to the office of President of the current session of the General Assembly. His long experience at the United Nations and his commitment to the Organization and its central role in international affairs make him ideally fitted to exercise this office. We look forward to working under his expert direction.

I should like also to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the efficiency and good grace with which he carried out his functions. The tireless activities of the Secretary-General are the very core of the effectiveness of the United Nations and I should like to assure him of our full co-operation and support as he carries out his vital task.

The Foreign Minister of France has already addressed the Assembly on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community. My Government fully endorsed the views on the issues facing the international community contained in that statement, which are common to all members of the Community.

Fifty years ago this month, as the Secretary-General reminds us in the introduction to his annual report, world war began in Europe. When peace came at last, after six years of war, the building of the United Nations began - a sign of hope rising from the ruins of conflict. This was the second effort in this century to create an organization to settle conflicts between States and bring an end to war.

Unlike its predecessor, the League of Nations, the United Nations was solidly founded; it has grown and developed now for more than 40 years. At first, the Organization was limited in membership to those who had been allies in the war. Its primary concern was to ensure that no aggressor would again bring war on a

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global scale. But over the years its concerns have widened as its membership has grown. It is now almost universal in its membership. It has hastened the end of colonialism and encouraged the transition to freedom and independence of many new States. Its concerns today extend to human rights and to issues of development as well as to disputes and conflicts between States.

Our world of nation States has a vital need for such a universal organization. We have become increasingly conscious of concerns at a global level which far transcend the boundaries of individual States and affect the future of humanity as a whole. We must still work for the resolution of conflicts, an end to the arms race and the promotion of human rights and development. But now, in addition, we have become aware of an important new agenda. There are issues in relation to our fragile human environment on this planet and its preservation that can only be addressed only at a global level. For this we need a universal organization and a co-operative approach with responsibility shared by all. It is vital that this effort be a global one. But it is also more difficult to reach an agreement within a universal organization, where many diverse interests must be reconciled. That is the new challenge that we face.

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In seeking to meet that challenge, we can count on a new and improved atmosphere in international relations. As we emerge from the shadows of the cold war, our hopes are greater than at any time since the United Nations was formed. The recent meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the United States and the Soviet Union is encouraging evidence that these two very important countries continue to build a relationship of confidence. That relationship is of importance for the whole world, most of all, perhaps, for Europe.

The far-reaching domestic changes in several Eastern European countries, notably in Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union, have played an important part in improving the climate of East-West relations. Among the most important of those changes is the evident determination to ensure respect for human rights. Regrettably, full respect for human rights is not yet the norm throughout Eastern Europe. For example, abuses of human rights affect large sections of the population of Romania and have caused large numbers of the Turkish ethnic minority to flee Bulgaria.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe process has already been fruitful and has benefited Europe, and it must have a central place in any consideration of the situation in Europe as a whole. We will continue to urge that all parties live up to the commitments they have freely made.

East-West relations, however, cover only one sector of the concerns of the world community. Our focus on these issues, understandable though it may be, should not lead us to ignore or neglect the legitimate concerns of the rest of the world. There must be no doubt that these concerns, too, will have our attention. There is a need, therefore, to widen the scope of our concern so that all nations will begin to benefit from the winds of political change. The United Nations is well placed to help in that process.

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Threats to the very survival of life on our planet are the most immediate global challenges. They call for new international commitment and determination. The curbing and reversing of the arms race and averting the threat to the global environment rank as challenges of unparalleled importance.

The arms race continues. Despite some modest improvements, enormous financial resources continue to be deployed, and wasted, in the quest for greater sophistication and superiority. Our enthusiasm for the current progress being made in arms-reduction talks cannot obscure that basic fact or relieve our concern.

Nothing short of the most deliberate and large-scale dismantling of forces and armaments seems likely to end the arms race. And until that happens, we will continue to live under the threats that those weapons pose. We are, of course, greatly encouraged by the declared intentions of the two super-Powers to cut their strategic nuclear weapons by half and by the progress being made towards conventional disarmament in Europe at the Vienna negotiations. Progress in those negotiations must be accelerated.

There is, however, a danger that the reduction in weapons numbers may be compensated for by the adoption of new and sophisticated weapons which are even more lethal and destabilizing than those in the arsenal at present. That would be a travesty of the disarmament process and must not occur.

We are disturbed at the failure so far to agree a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We welcome the agreement by the United States and the Soviet Union to make progress towards ratification of less far-reaching agreements and to negotiate further limitations. We urge them to proceed to a complete ban. This is especially important as we approach the 1990 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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The initiatives announced by the United States and the Soviet Union from this podium earlier in the week open the possibility of significant progress in ridding the world of chemical weapons. We look to early multilateral agreement on the complete elimination of these weapons of destruction. The world community has to see a real prospect of an end to this scourge and we call for a serious effort towards that objective.

Threats other than those posed by the arms race and armed conflict have developed in a more subtle fashion. The damage to our environment now constitutes a danger to the entire planet.

The Earth's very atmosphere is threatened by our activities. Life-giving resources are being destroyed by erosion, desertification and the devastation of tropical forests. Our rivers, lakes and seas are being poisoned with oils, chemicals and long-lasting nuclear waste. Pollution from nuclear-weapons establishments and the danger arising from accidents involving nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed vessels add a further dimension to the threat. My Government is particularly concerned at the potential hazard of nuclear submarines.

The danger is particularly acute in the narrow waterway of the Irish Sea, where the submarine traffic of several nations is intense. Already, there have been many incidents involving damage to fishing vessels by submarines travelling submerged. It is true that these are international waters, and in the present state of international law such vessels may pass freely through them. But with Chernobyl and its effects felt throughout Europe fresh in our minds, it takes no more than a little imagination to picture the disastrous consequences for neighbouring countries such as mine if one of those submerged nuclear reactors should meet with a really serious accident in narrow waters such as these.

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In the face of such serious dangers, it is not enough in my view to be concerned only about rights of passage established in another era. There is a need - a vital need - for a new sense of international responsibility on the part of the countries that operate these vessels in face of dangers undreamt of in previous times.

We hold this planet in trust not just for ourselves and for future generations of mankind, but for all life. The health of the Earth depends on a fragile balance. We do not know the consequences of upsetting that balance and upset it at our peril. The preservation of the health of the planet demands global co-operation. We must all promote and develop the rational, non-polluting use of the Earth's limited resources, and we must encourage the replenishment of the natural heritage with which we have been blessed.

Serious debate is required and serious decisions need to be taken, and the United Nations is well placed to move the world's Governments into action. Several important international conferences on the environment are planned, among them the London Conference next year of the parties to the Montreal Protocol, which offers an opportunity to take more stringent measures to protect the ozone layer. The European Community has a specific responsibility in that area, and Ireland, which will hold the Community presidency during that period, will work to the best of its ability to promote significant progress.

Despite a greater spirit of peace and an easing of international tension between East and West, instability and turmoil continue to affect the daily lives of many people. For many, the guns of war have not been silenced. Conflicts and tension persist in several regions, and there is still widespread human suffering and economic devastation.

The presidency of the European Community has already addressed the Assembly on the Community's support for actions which we hope will lead to a resolution of

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conflicts in a number of countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Cambodia and Central America. Ireland shares the concern which the presidency expressed and the determination of the Twelve to play a constructive role in helping resolve these terrible problems.

I would like to add some thoughts on two areas of conflict which are an affront to our conscience and sense of justice. I speak of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the inhuman system of apartheid.

In Gaza and the West Bank, a heavy toll has been exacted on the Palestinian people, often the very young, in their resistance to occupation. We are dismayed by the methods used in attempting to quell the disturbance by force. The policy of repression is not only unjust, it is also unsuccessful. Only a political solution can end these deep-seated problems.

We welcome the steady evolution of the Palestine Liberation Organization's position towards a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli problem. We also welcome the new momentum it has given to the peace process.

A comprehensive settlement of the conflict must guarantee security for all States in the region and self-determination for the Palestinian people. Within the framework of a negotiated peace settlement, it is for the Palestinian people to decide how it wishes to exercise its right to self-determination. We will be contributing what we can in the coming months to the efforts of the Twelve to advance a comprehensive settlement.

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Our hope is that the independent Palestinian State proclaimed unilaterally last year will become a reality, as a result of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices. All the parties concerned - including the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose role in representing the Palestinian people we have recognized - must participate directly in that conference.

We have all been appalled at the devastation which many years of conflict have wreaked on Lebanon. We welcome the efforts currently being undertaken by the three Heads of State of the Arab League, and the indications that a settlement may at last be in sight which will guarantee the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and see the introduction of significant political reforms and the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese troops - except, of course, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The continued capture and holding of hostages is deeply distressing. Many families have been stricken; my own country has not been spared. Among the hostages being held is an Irishman, Brian Keenan, who had been working in Beirut as a schoolteacher. Nobody has a right to hold innocent people hostage; nobody has a right to visit so much suffering on people who have no involvement in, and no responsibility for, the causes allegedly being served. To those who hold these hostages and to those who may be in a position to influence these people, my appeal is a simple one: "Free the hostages now".

In South Africa the shameful repression of the black population continues unabated. Bans on black political organizations and the black trade union movement remain. The detention of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners continues despite numerous appeals for their release. Many representatives of the Mass Democratic Movement have recently been arrested and remain in detention.

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In the most recent elections, black South Africans were again denied any voice in the political structures of their country. The elections were the very embodiment of discrimination. It is hard to consider them as the prelude to the abandonment of apartheid. Yet nothing less will do. We note the declared awareness now being displayed by the South African Government of the need for reform. It is long past time for real and meaningful change in South Africa. The South African Government must delay no longer in abolishing apartheid and in working with all the people of South Africa to build a society based on equality and justice.

In Namibia, the long-delayed process of independence has begun under United Nations auspices. Ireland is honoured to be associated with this process through the participation of Irish personnel in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group. I take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in fulfilling their roles. The next step - in November - is the holding of elections in which the Namibian people must, without intimidation, be free to express their sovereign will.

We are encouraged by recent initiatives towards national peace in Angola, and we also welcome indications of moves towards a settlement based on negotiation in Mozambique. There is, in the coming year, an opportunity for a general improvement in the situation in southern Africa. This opportunity must be grasped.

We firmly believe that it is only through deepening and strengthening the admittedly fragile ties on the Korean peninsula that tension can be reduced. In 1989, it is anomalous that the Korean peninsula is not represented in the United Nations, and we hope that this anomaly can soon be rectified.

The observance of human rights has a central place in any consideration of the state of the world. It can no longer be isolated or hidden behind national

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boundaries. Human rights are now a permanent and legitimate aspect of international relations. My Government welcome this evolution.

Nevertheless, it is clear that there are Governments which engage in massive violations of human rights. Their conduct is an affront to the inherent dignity of man and the conscience of humanity.

The European Community President has already mentioned our concerns for the observance and restoration of human rights in a number of countries. We would like to emphasize that Ireland has been deeply saddened by events in China since June. The violent suppression of peaceful demonstrations and the series of arrests and executions which followed have left a deep scar.

Irish public opinion has followed with concern the renewed threat to human rights in some countries of Central America. Effective action must be taken by the Governments concerned to end abuses, to bring those responsible to justice and to put in place political structures which will make those abuses a thing of the past.

The United Nations role in peace-keeping has been greatly enhanced in the last two years. Ireland has been proud to play a full part in these efforts. Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq and Namibia have shown the essential role that the United Nations and only the United Nations can play in the resolution of regional conflict.

Allow me for a moment, however, to reflect on what I might term the problems of success.

The dispatch of peace-keeping forces should be seen as a first step only in the resolution of conflict. It is not an end in itself. Without the necessary political will to reach a settlement, there is a great danger that the peace-keeping role of the United Nations may be seriously eroded.

The peace-keeping function, as it exists today or as further developed, requires the firm financial commitment of all the Member States. It is vital, not

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least from the point of view of political credibility, that the financing of peace-keeping be put on a sound footing.

The parties to regional conflicts have clear responsibilities which do not end with the deployment of United Nations peace-keeping forces. The United Nations peace-keeping role was designed not to replace, but to facilitate, the peace-keeping obligations of those parties.

If the obligation to move beyond a mere cessation of hostilities is accepted, we, the Members of the United Nations, should be prepared to entrust further responsibilities to our Organization. I hope that we might see the role of the United Nations develop further in the direction of peace-promotion by encouraging the conditions in which democracy can grow and flourish.

There is scope for greater United Nations involvement and more use of its expertise in election-monitoring. The Organization is, in fact, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, increasingly called on for this. Shortly, under United Nations supervision, the people of Namibia will elect their first independent Government. Other elections or referendums are proposed or are possible in several other areas beset by tension. The attitude towards elections has also begun to change in many parts of the world where democratically elected Governments have not been the norm in the past.

We should carefully consider the possibilities for greater United Nations involvement in this process. There may also be a role for the United Nations in undertaking related tasks in the furtherance of democracy, perhaps through the promotion of international standards for free and honest elections.

We cannot manage the welfare of this planet if we ignore the well-being of those of its people who are denied its fruits because of underdevelopment. We must move towards bridging the deep divide between rich and poor countries, between developed and developing. The 1980s have in many cases been a lost decade for

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development. Among the problems facing developing countries, the debt problem looms large. In many cases, it is countries which are least able to do so that are being the greatest debt burdens. A resolution of the debt problems besetting third world countries calls for urgent and continuing attention on the part of both the lenders and debtors alike. We welcome the widespread acceptance of the need for the reduction of the debt burden.

The gap separating the least developed of the third world countries has widened further. The problems of the least developed sub-Saharan countries are particularly alarming. The international community must consider more effective and timely action to assist and alleviate the growing crisis that they face.

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The resolution of the problems of the world's developing countries will not occur overnight. It can come about only if sustained efforts on their part are supported by the international community. Those of us in the more developed countries should not imagine that we are insulated from the problems created by underdevelopment. If, out of dire necessity to provide food or to repay debt, developing countries choose environmentally unsound path, we will all suffer. Damage to the environment anywhere in the world affects us all. It would be tragic if the developing countries were to repeat the mistakes of the developed world. We can avoid these environmental consequences only if we tackle with determination the problem of underdevelopment.

The United Nations system can play an important role in furthering the economic advancement of developing countries and in strengthening economic co-operation for the benefit of all. Several important conferences devoted to development, including a special session of the General Assembly, are being convened. The fourth international development strategy is being elaborated. In this process, developed and developing countries alike will be able to commit themselves anew to decisive and effective co-operation to achieve lasting solutions to the problems of the developing world. Together, we must work to make the 1990s a decade of genuine development.

No discussion of global questions can be complete without reference to the seas, which cover the larger part of the Earth's surface. The Convention on the Law of the Sea is a milestone in the history of international law-making and co-operation, which must not be allowed to fail. Universal acceptance of its provisions still eludes us because some elements relating to the régime for the sea-bed have not found general acceptance. We believe, however, that there now exists a climate that opens the way for dialogue between all States, with a view to

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achieving a universally acceptable convention. We hope that there will be the widest possible participation in this process.

For 20 years - since August 1969, when the Irish Government made an urgent plea for the involvement of the United Nations to stem the tide of violence that threatened to engulf Northern Ireland - successive Foreign Ministers of Ireland have reported annually to the General Assembly on developments in that troubled part of our island. Twenty years on, the situation in Northern Ireland remains of central concern to my Government and continues to claim the attention of the international community.

The conflict in Northern Ireland is, first and foremost, a human tragedy. We must never lose a sense of the sadness and loss that lie behind statistics of death and injury. This was brought home to us most forcefully in the past week by the utterly senseless killing of 10 young British army bandmen in southern England. The perpetrators of this atrocity stand condemned by both the British and the Irish Governments and peoples and by world opinion.

But our human sympathy for the victims of violence, instinctive and deep as it is, and our unqualified condemnation of its perpetrators are not in themselves sufficient. As public representatives, we have a responsibility to work actively and imaginatively to achieve political solutions to the underlying political problems.

Central to the situation in Northern Ireland are some of the same elements that are at the heart of a number of conflicts elsewhere in the world. It is a society divided by radically different interpretations of history, different senses of identity, and different aspirations for the future. The very complexity of such conflicts defies any simple solution. There is no easy formula for harmonizing memories and reconciling aspirations. A minimum first step, however, is to seek to identify those elements that are essential to an enduring solution.

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The fundamental prerequisite for progress is equality. Its presence may not guarantee a resolution of the problem, but its absence will surely mean that a settlement will continue to evade us. Only on the basis of equality can we conduct an open-minded dialogue leading to reconciliation.

Confidence in the essential fairness and equality of the system is fundamental to any healthy society. It was the total, and well-founded, absence of that confidence on the part of the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland that formed the background to the fateful events of autumn 1969. Many of the basic civil rights demands articulated then have received a response in the 20 intervening years. More have been answered since the signature, in 1985, of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which has as one of its basic objectives the achievement of equality of treatment for all.

In the past year, for example, new fair-employment legislation for Northern Ireland has gone on the statute books, and we now look to the effective implementation of that legislation. However, action on the economic front has to be sustained, and equality in the distribution of economic resources has to be developed. Although a legacy of economic discrimination is not easily shaken off, with determination on the part of all involved it must, and will, be.

As fundamental as economic equality must be confidence on the part of the community generally in the essential even-handedness of all the instruments of government, including the administration of justice and the operation of the security forces. If that confidence is absent, there will inevitably be an erosion of moral and political authority.

My Government has consistently pointed to the need for the security forces in Northern Ireland to win the trust of the nationalist community. In particular, we have focused, over the past year, on the urgent need to address the problem of

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harassment of the nationalist community by elements within the security forces. We have had to register our deep concern at the involvement of members of the security forces in the most serious of crimes, including murder, and at the growing evidence, in recent weeks, of collusion between members of the security forces and loyalist paramilitaries. We have also had to protest at decisions, within the past year, to allow soldiers to resume service after they had been found guilty of most serious crimes in Northern Ireland. We have raised these concerns with the British Government in the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. We are convinced that only the most effective and urgent response can repair the damage done by these recent developments.

Despite such set-backs, we must continue to work for political progress. I believe that the Anglo-Irish Agreement - recently fortified by the review of its workings - plays a crucial role in this regard. But the effectiveness of the Agreement as a framework for reform, co-operation and political progress must be developed continually by both Governments. Likewise, the differences that, inevitably, will arise from time to time between Dublin and London in the operation of the Agreement must be tackled resolutely and overcome, and the two Governments must, together, demonstrate their firm commitment at all times to moving the Agreement forward.

Never has there been such a vital need for innovative and creative thinking within, and about, Northern Ireland; never has there been greater urgency about translating such thinking into practical steps forward. Both the British and the Irish Governments, as well as both sectors of the community in Northern Ireland, have responsibilities in this regard. For our part, we must - as we do - strive to understand that mix of emotions, interests and loyalties from which unionism draws its character and strength. We have continually to remind ourselves of unionists'

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fears. We have to ensure that our friendship is not mistaken for threat, and our genuine concerns dismissed as one-sided complaints.

The Irish Prime Minister - the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey - has repeatedly made clear that the Irish Government wants to enter a new dialogue with unionists. Our door is open, and we stand ready to advance to meet our unionist colleagues in mutual respect and friendship. We say directly to the unionist leaders that there is nothing to be lost - neither self-respect nor political advantage nor integrity of position - by meeting with us to discuss together how we can share our island. The gain will be for all the people of Northern Ireland who long for leadership out of the present political impasse.

We will address the period ahead with the same unswerving commitment to a resolution of the problems of Northern Ireland that informed our approach to this Organization 20 years ago. On that occasion, the then Irish Foreign Minister emphasized that

"Differences in political outlook or religious belief need not set people apart ... the real barriers are those created by fear, suspicion and intolerance".

Today, I again evoke that sentiment, applicable not just in Northern Ireland but in so many situations worldwide. If our discourses at this annual debate of the General Assembly do anything to enlarge understanding or to help lower those barriers, they will indeed have proved worthwhile.

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The United Nations proved its value as the forum in which all questions of global concern should be resolved. The opportunity exists to make further progress in putting into practice many of the principles of the Charter which up to now have been only imperfectly observed.

We note gratefully that many of the tensions and rivalries that have bedevilled the conduct of international relations over the years are now part of the past. We are therefore faced with a unique opportunity. We know that the heritage of future generations is threatened and that action has to be taken soon to protect our environment. We know that an unchecked arms race is not adding to our security but taking from it. We know that assault on the human rights and dignity of the individual in any country is an assault on us all. We know that we cannot sit passive and uninterested as regional conflicts and tension continue and fester. And we know that the problems of the poor and the underdeveloped will not solve themselves without new and better directed support.

We must begin to move closer to the goal of a more just, more secure, fairer and cleaner world and we now have a real opportunity to work for progress towards those aims through this Organization.

Mr. AL-KHALIFA (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to start by congratulating Ambassador Garba of Nigeria on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and wishing him success in directing its proceedings. I should also like to convey our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Dante Caputo who, as President of the Assembly at its forty-third session, guided our proceedings with admirable efficiency.

I cannot fail to refer in that respect to the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization as a complete record of the issues and topics competently addressed by the United Nations since the forty-third session. I avail myself of this opportunity to express our utmost appreciation to

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Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the prominent role he has assumed in this regard and for his unrelenting efforts to promote the role of the Organization in the maintenance of peace and security and in the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Charter.

This session convenes in an atmosphere of international détente characterized by a spirit of dialogue, the building of bridges of trust and co-operation among States and the solution of international problems by peaceful means rather than by confrontation and resorting to the use of force. During the past two years, the world has witnessed an energetic move towards resolving some of the chronic regional conflicts which, for many years, have been a source of concern to the international community. We also witnessed a collective tendency towards strengthening the role of the United Nations in controlling the hotbeds of tension in several critical areas of the world.

At the beginning of this month leaders of the non-aligned countries met in Belgrade to examine and assess the international situation and to discuss the latest developments on the road to peaceful coexistence, the coexistence which constitutes the main objective of the Movement. The wills of the Member States of the Movement converged on the need to improve the methods for dealing with international problems, in order to keep pace with the latest developments that have taken place on the world scene, and to devise a unified conception of an integrated strategy for a future in which co-operation in all fields will prevail.

The lessons of history and the experiences of the past have proved to us that preserving the vitality of the role of the United Nations in the area of international co-operation must remain a fundamental constant in our changing world. That is because we live in a world where boundaries overlap and interests and relationships intertwine to such an extent that it is impossible for

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any individual State, no matter how powerful or how great its potential, to isolate itself within its own boundaries and solve its problems alone and apart from the outside world.

The improvement we are witnessing in the relations between the two major blocs confirms our conviction that differences in political philosophies and ideologies should not impede the accommodation of different interests, nor should they hamper co-operation between States with different political and socio-economic systems.

Proceeding from this perspective it can be said that the decade of the nineties heralds drastic changes in the course of international relations, as well as positive trends and constructive steps to develop the concept of collective security, a concept which once was only a vision in the minds of the architects of the Charter. Such new changes and trends would, in turn, develop multilateral international co-operation in the coming years for the promotion and advancement of the international community to the benefit of mankind and human civilization as a whole.

During the 1980s, the United Nations has had to tackle various global political, economic and social problems. The United Nations fulfilled the tasks entrusted to it and has been able to adjust to this changing world. It has thus asserted its credibility and ensured its future viability. The extent of the change in the working methods of the Organization in response to new developments on the world scene becomes evident from even a quick glance at the items on the agenda of successive sessions of the General Assembly. However, the criterion for measuring its success in carrying out its future responsibilities will no doubt be decided by how much it can absorb the facts of the new era and conform to them in order to address the issues of the environment - poverty, famine, disease and natural disasters.

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It goes without saying that the United Nations cannot carry out these vital tasks without the contribution of every State towards finding an appropriate formula for achieving interdependence among nations in a new world where the human race is perceived as an indivisible whole.

Allow me in this context to concentrate on three main issues which we feel should be dealt with seriously and effectively. The issues should be given close attention by the United Nations so that appropriate solutions may be found to them.

The first such issue is the promotion of peace and security in the world. Progress achieved in the peaceful solution of certain regional conflicts has aroused a feeling of optimism in the international community, a feeling which often leads us to believe that real possibilities for finding just and lasting solutions to the pending international problems do exist. However, when it comes to the question of Palestine, such hopes dissipate as Israel reveals its true intentions about peace.

Over the four decades since its founding, Israel's talk of peace has remained one of many empty slogans, since its response to Arab peace initiatives was invariably to consolidate its occupation, refine its methods of oppression and intimidation of the Palestinian people, demean their dignity and violate their human rights. Then came the heroic intifadah which wore out the Zionist entity. Having despaired of suppressing it, Israel believes that by sowing dissension in the Palestinian ranks and by absorbing international pressures through what it calls the Shamir election initiative, it can quell that intifadah.

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The awareness and steadfastness displayed by the Palestinians, however, came contrary to all Israeli expectations and accounts. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, was able to face up to the Israeli manoeuvre by asserting wisely and objectively that free elections cannot be held under occupation, nor can they be held away from international supervision. Such elections should take place within the framework of a comprehensive peace process in which Israel declares its acceptance of the principle of "land for peace".

At the core of the peace process in the Middle East is the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination in their own national soil and to establish their own independent State. It would be totally unjust to pay heed to the allegations advanced by Israel about the dangers inherent in establishing the Palestinian State, since such allegations are null and void and designed to help Israel overcome the dilemma of the intifadah in which it has been fumbling blindly for nearly two years.

We therefore appeal to the General Assembly to call upon the Security Council to impose international legitimacy in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176, which defines the foundations of a just peace between all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as urgently convening the international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations as the appropriate vehicle for finding a realistic solution to the Middle East problem.

In the interest of of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Gulf area, the State of Bahrain since the very beginning welcomed the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran and the commencement of negotiations between them under the auspices of the United Nations. While supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at conciliating the viewpoints of both parties and narrowing their differences, we are hopeful that both countries will be able to arrive at a formula for a durable,

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comprehensive and just peace between them through the implementation of Security Council resolution 593 (1987) in all its provisions, since that resolution is a comprehensive peace plan, as well as by adherence to the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference in internal affairs of other countries and the establishment of relations on the basis of mutual trust and respect.

Regarding the Lebanese crisis, 15 years of a bloody strife have failed to ensure security or stability for Lebanon. They have convinced all Lebanese factions of the necessity of finding through dialogue a peaceful solution that will achieve national accord in order to ensure the country's future and preserve its unity free from all external interference. We therefore urge all people of good will and appeal to their conscience to support the efforts of the tripartite Arab High Committee. In welcoming the resumption of its efforts to end the Lebanese crisis we earnestly hope that all parties concerned will co-operate with the Committee in order to enable it to fulfil its task and that all parties will begin to implement its resolutions for the good of Lebanon and its people.

The right to self-determination is organically linked to the question of promoting peace and security in southern Africa. We have followed with interest the efforts of the United Nations and the endeavours of its Secretary-General to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia. We look forward to the day when an independent Namibia will take its place in this very Hall and we consider that to be one of the important achievements of the United Nations in its ceaseless quest to eliminate colonialism and support every people's struggle for freedom and national independence.

Despite the positive and encouraging developments in southern Africa, the Pretoria régime continues to persist in its racist and inhuman policies. We therefore renew our call to the international community to continue its efforts aimed at completely eradicating the policies of apartheid in South Africa and at

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the establishment of a democratic fraternal society in which freedom, justice, equality and respect for human rights prevail.

As for the situation in Afghanistan, we hope that the United Nations will continue to utilize its capabilities and use its good offices to find a solution to the prevailing situation there that will enable the Afghan people to choose the political and social system acceptable to it, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

It is regrettable also that the question of Cyprus remains unresolved and that the split between the two Cypriot communities continues to exist. In this regard I should like to reiterate Bahrain's support for the unity of Cyprus, its independence and non-aligned status. We hope that the bi-communal dialogue conducted under the auspices of the Secretary-General will make progress.

We hope too that direct dialogue between the two parts of the Korean peninsula will improve relations between them and help realize the aspirations of the Korean people for a restoration of their national unity.

The second issue, which is no less important than the first, is that of global development. It poses a major challenge to the international community in its persistent endeavour to lay the foundations of economic and social progress and improve the standards of living of people throughout the world, as envisaged in the Charter. The riches of our world are distributed very unevenly. In this era of the conquest of space and impressive scientific and technological advancement, it is no longer tolerable to find that poorer nations continue to struggle for survival under circumstances of extreme austerity which have already led to unstable political, economic and social conditions in them. Indeed it is distressing that more than one fourth of the world's population should lack adequate shelter and that 100 million people should be without shelter altogether.

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While demographic and social indicators can explain the magnitude of the tragedy in the countries of the third world, nevertheless it is underdevelopment that is the most complex and serious problem of our times.

The international community is facing an acute crisis as a result, inter alia, of structural imbalances in the world economic order: the widening gap between the developed and developing countries, the majority of which is still suffering from external debt problems; deteriorating terms of trade, and unstable rates of exchange. These factors have combined to produce a negative phenomenon reflected in the reverse transfer of financial resources from developing to developed countries and a marked impasse in the North-South dialogue.

Solving the debt crisis requires, in the first place, the elaboration of a new plan for the development of the third world and that creditor countries recognize the need of debtor nations to be able to negotiate collectively on the basis of an integrated programme to be developed following a realistic examination and through joint co-ordination, in order to bring about a more effective and global policy. The current international situation provides a propitious opportunity for the success of such an initiative. The present improvement in the international atmosphere must be exploited to give new impetus to multilateral co-operation so that feasible, permanent solutions to the third world debt crisis can be found.

It is now widely recognized that, so long as the arms race continues, development cannot be fully achieved. Although the world has witnessed a rapid arms race during the previous three decades, present possibilities are promising: disarmament proposals, including initiatives for the reduction of conventional weapons, are being considered by the States members of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. The success of such initiatives would surely be of great help in reducing tensions in Europe and in re-orienting international efforts towards comprehensive development programmes.

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While disarmament and arms reductions are pre-requisites for development, economic integration is the most important element of its synergy and the most noticeable component of its success. Economic integration has become an important developmental necessity dictated by the demands of our times in the context of current world developments, and is one alternative for solving the economic problems of developing countries.

We are living today in an era of major economic groupings based on a balancing of interests and interdependence. While most of the successful economic groupings today are composed of developed countries, it is the developing countries that are in dire need of such institutions to enable them to achieve economic integration and build societies of progress and prosperity for their peoples. The European Community was the first to succeed in building the edifice of economic integration that will culminate in an economically united Europe in 1992. Similarly, the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) has, since its inception in 1981, followed the same course for achieving the integration of its six member States on their way to socio-economic unity.

Stressing the importance of such regional co-operation, Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Amir of the State of Bahrain and Chairman of the current session of the GCC, has said, "Developments in our contemporary world, together with the interrelationship of international interests and their continuous interaction with changing events, have dictated political, economic and social tendencies towards co-operation and integration within the various regional groups, leading them to unite their entities, thus keeping pace with the march of time and the progress of the human race. It was from this premise that the Gulf Co-operation Council emerged as one of the most important, if not the most important, achievements of our region."

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Since the signing of the Unified Economic Agreement in 1981, the GCC States have taken steady steps toward economic integration through expanding the Gulf common market and accelerating economic development. The Manama Declaration issued by the ninth summit meeting of Bahrain held in December 1988, affirmed the determination of the States members of the Council to continue working jointly to attain the aspirations of their peoples. The Supreme Council also adopted a number of important resolutions which involved encouraging the establishment of joint industrial ventures, reinforcing the principle of Gulf citizenship, permitting the citizens of GCC States to own shares in the joint stock companies active in the economic field, and equal tax treatment for citizens of all GCC States in the area of investments.

This year has also witnessed the birth of two other similar organizations: the Council for Arab Co-operation and the Arab Maghreb Union. The GCC welcomed the establishment of both of these new Arab groupings as a qualitative and essential development strengthening relations between the States members of the League of Arab States and as a channel for natural communication between them and the United Nations with a view to achieving the regional development that the Charter encourages. We are certain that the three Arab groupings will effectively endeavour to evolve co-operation at the regional level and promote the process of economic integration, thus contributing to the welfare and prosperity of the Arab region.

The phenomenon of the spread of narcotic drugs has become a factor impeding progress and undermining the very foundations of societies, particularly through its devastating effects on young people, who are an important pillar of development. Islam has fought the abuse of narcotics and banned their use for all but scientific and medical purposes. Thus, our Islamic jurisprudence (Shari'a) has

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provided us with an invincible bastion of ethical values that has limited the spread of this phenomenon in our societies.

Despite the fact that more than 30 years have elapsed since the launching of the international campaign against the abuse of narcotic drugs, this problem is still with us, albeit in varying degrees of severity from country to country. The whole world today is organizing concerted efforts and intensive campaigns against drug addiction and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, which are destructive activities and a crime against humanity as a whole. In accordance with the teachings of our Islamic religion, the State of Bahrain has given its maximum attention to avoiding the spread of narcotic drugs and drug addiction within its boundaries, and has promulgated a series of laws to prohibit the use of, addiction to and circulation of narcotics and illicit trafficking in them.

Proceeding from our keen desire to contribute to the international campaign against the abuse of narcotic drugs, and in support of international co-operation for eradicating this dangerous phenomenon which affects various cross-sections and groups of human society, the State of Bahrain has decided to accede to the following conventions: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971; and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 - which we signed yesterday.

The third issue, the environment, is closely linked to the previous issue, since development and the environment are indivisible. Today, I do not think there can be any disagreement on the importance of preserving the mechanisms that ensure the renewal of the biosphere in order to protect the future of humanity. The problems of air pollution, desertification, the transfer of wastes, pollution of the seas and oceans, the depletion of the ozone layer, and other problems, are at

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the forefront of the list of international concerns owing to their negative impact on humanity's present and future.

The world today has reached a stage where some economic development programmes are threatening the environment with irreparable damage. Such damage could even endanger the elements themselves and the balance of nature's cycle on which the very survival of planet Earth depends.

Our view of the world we live in has undergone a conspicuous transformation. It is a view of ceaselessly evolving and constantly changing world. This vision requires a new international strategy for development governed by the principle of the imperative of concordance and harmony between the objectives of development and the requirements for preserving the environment, a strategy that would serve mankind without endangering its fate.

Thus, environmental preservation is no longer limited to merely selecting appropriate methods to deal with certain accidents or to adopting a series of measures designed to deal with each case separately, but calls for an approach which seeks to eliminate the contradictions between the rationale behind the strategies for economic development and that which governs the policies for preserving the environment.

Hence we welcome the initiatives put forward in this respect, particularly the proposals of the committee presided over by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway. We believe that those proposals constitute a good basis for revitalizing international co-operation in this field and for intensifying efforts with a view to finding an approach which would ensure safe development.

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In this regard, we also support the convening, in 1992, of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to deal with the major issues facing our contemporary world in the context of social and economic development, as well as the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Committee on the Environment and Development, and the Environmental Perspective to the year 2000 and beyond, in addition to formulating a programme for future activities in this vital area.

The international community is at present undergoing a process of radical transformation, a process which will be reflected, in one way or another, in the components of the existing world order. A characteristic of such historical transformation is the presence of thesis and anti-thesis, the synthesis of which would help to make progress. Consequently, the future of the world is dependent upon the stability of the process of confidence-building among nations and upon how deeply rooted are the yearnings for the unity of human fate in the face of major challenges, foremost among which are the strengthening of peace, the promotion of development and the preservation of the environment.

As a focal point for international action, the United Nations must, at this important phase in the history of mankind, evolve its role in order to achieve the common objectives which are dictated by mutual interests. It must endeavour to restore the unity of humankind in all its aspects, so as to overcome the narrow self-interests of States and provide for the role of the human being in rehabilitating this Earth and preserving its civilization.

We need not recall today that we stand at the threshold of the twenty-first century, with the responsibilities and obligations that implies. This should prompt us to close ranks around our Organization to ensure that it proceeds towards bright prospects and a prosperous future for coming generations.

Mr. SAVETSILA (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, permit me to extend to Ambassador Garba our warmest congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His recognized wisdom, proven diplomatic skill and strong dedication will undoubtedly contribute to the successful work of this Assembly at an important juncture in the life of the United Nations. We are grateful to Nigeria and, indeed, to Africa for providing us with the services of one of its most distinguished sons.

Permit me also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Dante M. Caputo, President of the forty-third session, for the leadership, dedication and wisdom he has shown over the past year.

May I also extend our warm felicitations to all the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. While representing the different regions of the world, they also reflect the universality of the United Nations.\*

Developments over the past year enable me to maintain a high degree of hope and optimism. Twelve months ago, I stood here at this podium and welcomed a new and more encouraging trend in international affairs: a trend towards peace and accommodation; a trend towards co-operation and consensus among the permanent members of the Security Council; a trend towards what I called "a new world order of peace and justice". It is a trend that I believe continues to be discernible.

But it is also clear that numerous and substantial tasks remain before us.

Détente and relaxation of tensions among the major Powers have not been translated in all cases into resolution of outstanding regional and global issues. In many cases, what is urgently required is a more active intervention on the part of an impartial international body such as the United Nations. The time is ripe

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\* Mr. Vraalsen (Norway), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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for the United Nations to act with increased vigour. We should not let the opportunity provided by a more favourable international environment pass us by.

The dream of a free Namibia needs to be realized with the full implementation of the United Nations plan for the Independence of Namibia. The return to Namibia, after 30 years of exile, of Mr. Sam Nujoma, the courageous nationalist, augurs well and should be a positive step for peace in that country.

Sadly, no significant progress has been made in neighbouring South Africa. The bankrupt policy of apartheid continues. We have spoken in outrage of this inhuman policy and system. We have condemned it in this and other forums. The United Nations must continue to press Pretoria to make the necessary transition, by focusing attention on the issue and by maintaining political and economic pressure. We can only hope that reason and good sense will prevail soon enough to avert the tragedy waiting to occur in South Africa.

In the Middle East, the question of Palestine also remains unresolved. The Palestine Liberation Organization's acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) was a major step forward. Yet peace is not at hand. The inalienable rights of the Palestinians are still being denied. The intifadah is a manifestation of the struggle for freedom that continues unabated in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

The overwhelming majority of members of this Assembly have made clear what needs to be accomplished. The foundation for a possible solution has been established with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as well as other Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and decisions. Let these serve as guidelines towards an eventual settlement of this problem, which for too long has held back peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

Earlier this morning, I listened with great interest to President Mubarak's speech. My delegation was encouraged by recent developments which have helped to produce conditions favourable for the launching of dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis without pre-conditions. My delegation wishes also to express the earnest hope that this proposed dialogue will lead to a "converging perception of steps which would pave the way for peace and for overall agreement on conditions for a comprehensive settlement". Furthermore, Thailand has always supported the convening of an international peace conference as part of this process in order that a final comprehensive political settlement can be achieved, paving the way to a durable peace in this important region of the world.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

As we look north from Palestine, we see the continuation of another conflict, one that has caused so much suffering and so many deaths. For so many years, members of the international community have tried hard, but in vain, to end the bloodshed in Lebanon. A political solution through national reconciliation is desperately needed in Lebanon.

I welcome the Arab League Committee's announcement of 16 September proposing a new peace plan for Lebanon. My delegation hopes that all the parties concerned, including the United Nations itself, will join the Arab League in working for the immediate termination of the hostilities that have gone on for far too long in Lebanon.

Closer to home, developments concerning the Korean Peninsula continue to be very important to the question of peace and stability in north-east Asia. For this reason, the unification initiative by President Roh Tae Woo deserves serious consideration. Furthermore, we would welcome any move by the Koreans to join this Organization if they so desired, for we believe in the principle of universality of membership in the United Nations.

In my delegation's immediate part of the world, the question of Kampuchea also remains unresolved. The General Assembly has for 10 years laid down guidelines for the restoration of peace and security in that war-torn country, but thus far, diplomatic efforts within and outside the Organization have proved insufficient. The two Jakarta Informal Meetings convened over the past year were significant regional efforts. The Paris International Conference on Cambodia in August helped the parties and participants concerned to come to grips with the complex technical problems and difficult political issues. My own Government has attempted to maintain informal dialogues with the Kampuchean parties concerned to avert large-scale hostilities. But peace remains elusive.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

Only a political settlement of the Kampuchean problem in a comprehensive manner can assure a return to peace and order in that country. A solution which addresses only one or two out of the multitude of aspects for a comprehensive settlement will invite prolonged hostilities and impose further hardship on the Kampuchians.

My delegation notes the announced withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea. But in the absence of United Nations supervision, control and verification, we are unable to be confident that all the foreign troops have left. And indeed, the reality on the ground at present appears to be one of intensified fighting.

My delegation believes that it is crucial and most pragmatic for the United Nations to be intimately involved in the implementation of any peace plan for Kampuchea. The institutional expertise and long experience of the United Nations are universally acknowledged, especially in the area of peace-keeping and in the preparations for, and supervision of, free, fair and democratic elections. The same applies to the repatriation of the half million Kampuchean refugees and displaced persons. A central role for the United Nations in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts for Kampuchea will also be vitally important.

Let me now turn to the problem of refugees in South-East Asia. Refugees and displaced persons from Kampuchea, Laos and Viet Nam remain a humanitarian problem of some magnitude. For this reason, my delegation recalls with much satisfaction the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, convened in Geneva by the Secretary-General this past June. The Declaration and the Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted at that Conference contain much-needed and timely guidelines for coping with this problem in an all-embracing and balanced manner by all who are directly concerned within the region and beyond. It was good work. I commend all who participated and made it possible to arrive at the conclusion we reached. The

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

co-operation of the international community is still essential and, it is hoped, will be forthcoming at the levels required.

Let me move from problems of the various regions to problems that affect all of us without exception on this planet. The first among these is the continuing build-up of conventional, nuclear and chemical weapons. Billions upon billions of dollars continue to be channelled to developing and deploying armaments. The major Powers among us now have instruments capable of destroying this planet many times over.

A reduction of a mere 2 per cent of these expenditures by major Powers would yield upwards of at least \$200 billion a year in resources for peaceful development purposes. This is four times more than the total amount of resources available in the world for development today. Such a small reduction in the defence budgets of the major Powers in the armaments field cannot possibly nullify their military capability to defend themselves. But the resources that could be diverted to development purposes would help redress economic imbalances and mitigate some of the causes of regional conflicts.

With this in mind, my delegation welcomes the report of progress made in the disarmament talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. My delegation hopes that progress in bilateral negotiations will be complemented by progress in multilateral negotiations. This week, from this same podium, the President of the United States and the Soviet Foreign Minister made important proposals on the subject of chemical weapons. We welcome both proposals as significant initiatives marking a major step towards the global elimination of all types of chemical weapons.

Another problem which affects all of us on this planet as we approach the beginning of the twenty-first century is the environment - our common environment.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

How well mankind may survive into the next century depends upon how well we preserve and conserve the Earth's environment.

The list of serious environmental problems grows ever longer. We pollute the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil we till. We let loose chemicals that puncture holes in the ozone layer, and we dump our dangerous unwanted toxic wastes upon one another. At this rate, we cannot hope to pass on to posterity the environmental heritage entrusted to us by preceding generations of humanity.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

I am pleased to share with the Assembly my Government's own modest efforts addressed in our current national economic and social development plan. Logging concessions have been revoked. Urgent measures are being made in reforestation throughout the Kingdom. We have also designated 1989 as the Year of Natural Resources Preservation and Environmental Protection. We will intensify public awareness of environmental issues.

But environmental issues cannot be successfully tackled by single nations or even groups of nations. They require the universal support and efforts that can be marshalled only by the United Nations. We must devise common strategies to combat these pressing problems at the national, regional and international levels. Our common strategies must be based on full awareness of these problems and dangers. My delegation is pleased that the environment is now receiving the broad interest of this world body.

It is fitting and urgently necessary that environmental protection should also be at the top of the regional development agenda. For this reason, my delegation commends the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its proposed convening of a ministerial-level conference on the environment for Asia and the Pacific in 1990. We will encourage this conference to produce practical guidelines and measures for immediate implementation. This conference should serve as an important step towards the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. My delegation welcomes Brazil's generous offer to host that important conference.

Another problem of grave concern and magnitude that threatens us all because it recognizes no boundaries is drugs. Drugs are insidious and lethal: insidious because of the greed they inspire in those who would prey upon us; lethal because drugs completely destroy not only the individuals, but also the society of which

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

these individuals are a part. We support those who have declared a war on drugs because war is what it takes to combat and to vanquish this menace.

National efforts are essential and international co-operation and co-ordination are crucial in a total war on drugs. The United Nations convention on this issue adopted in December 1988 points the way towards more effective and comprehensive international efforts. But eradication of this menace cannot succeed if the demand for illicit drugs continues to beckon the supply. Social and cultural dimensions of the problem at both the demand and the supply ends must be addressed.

I have spoken of global problems that we all share because the Assembly is the most appropriate forum in which to discuss them. They are problems that threaten us and our survival. I have spoken of the need to work as one to tackle them. There is an underlying interdependence we all share. Interdependence has been the driving philosophy of this House. In one major aspect of international life the critical importance of interdependence needs to be further underlined. This is in the economic and the development fields.

My country and most of those within my region believe in an open multilateral trading system. We have been more fortunate than some in our ability to obtain the kind of growth and development we have today. The countries in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are our partners. So now are the Pacific Rim countries. Together we hope to spur growth and development for the Asia and the Pacific area as a whole. We see this expanded regional co-operation as a means to promote a multilateral trading system which is outward-looking and in harmony with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Through our regional efforts my delegation hopes to achieve a unanimity of understanding that a free and open multilateral trading system is mutually beneficial over the long term and that, in contrast, protectionism is harmful to

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

all our common interests. If those basic objectives could be achieved, perhaps the international community could be on the way towards easing debt and other economic problems. For those reasons my delegation has attached great importance to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and, through it, the promotion of trade liberalization.

In addition, there are other economic problems that must be addressed as well. These include trade imbalances, the fluctuation of exchange rates, depressed commodity prices and the net transfer of financial resources from developing countries. On all those issues unilateral measures will not suffice. Political will, international co-operation and constructive dialogue are required to effect the necessary structural changes.

Here again the role of the General Assembly is a beneficial one. In its wisdom the Assembly has decided to focus the world's attention on these pressing problems at a special session on international economic co-operation in 1990. There are also special categories of countries that need special attention within the framework of the United Nations. For this reason the Second Conference on the Least Developed Countries next year also has my delegation's full support and endorsement.

As we look down the road towards the end of this century and the beginning of the next, I am convinced that we could be on the threshold of an era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. International co-operation and understanding are the key components of any strategy to reach these goals. In such a strategy I see the United Nations as an indispensable instrument and our deliberations here as the necessary catalyst. I also see the role of the Secretary-General as crucial in these common endeavours. Under the leadership of our Secretary-General the Organization has made a difference. Under him it has become even more relevant to our lives.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

I wish the President of the Assembly great success in overseeing the important work that lies before us. At the end of this forty-fourth session I trust we shall be one step closer to the goals of peace and prosperity we seek for all mankind.

Mr. FOOS (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Government of Luxembourg, I wish to convey to our President our warmest congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the Assembly. Along with his wealth of diplomatic experience, particularly as Foreign Minister of one of the most important countries in Africa, he has sound qualities enabling him to direct our work wisely and effectively.

On Tuesday Mr. Roland Dumas, Foreign Minister of France, expressed the views of the 12 States Members of the European Community about the main subjects on the current international scene. Since his statement reflected our common concerns, I shall confine myself to giving just a few additional details.

Over the past 12 months we have noted a continued general improvement in international relations. A favourable climate is developing between the Soviet Union and the United States, between East and West and between North and South. Big steps forward have been made in the solution of a number of regional conflicts, making a reality of the favourable prospects noted last year. More and more the military option and military pressure are giving way to negotiation and co-operation, on the basis of the principles of the Charter, as a means of solving international problems.

It is, first, in Europe that we see these favourable developments, accompanied by profound changes. The European Community is pursuing with determination its process of unification. The creation of a single market adds an important dimension to that movement. The Community is open, and will remain open, to all the countries of the world, and, true to its purpose, it is bringing about new opportunities for growth and co-operation for all.

In the light of that process, we welcome the emergence of open and truly democratic societies in Central and Eastern Europe.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

The first free elections in Poland, which have just taken place, as well as the programme of the new Government resulting from those elections, offers prospects - undoubtedly difficult to make a reality, but extremely encouraging - of the building of a Poland that is master of its own fate and faithful to the identity and the most cherished aspirations of its people.

Similar developments are occurring in Hungary, on the basis of conditions that are peculiar to that country. There, too, the way is now open for a multi-party system.

In the Soviet Union the process of democratization is making headway. In particular, it has been cemented by the creation of new institutions - the People's Congress and the Supreme Soviet - following elections in which a plurality of candidates was assured.

We hope that the course thus embarked upon will be followed by the other countries of Eastern Europe, so that the end of the twentieth century will be marked by the triumph of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Significant economic restructuring is accompanying those political changes. With them, there will be a progressive elimination of bureaucratic, centralized planning, which will give way to a market economy, one with social responsibility, but based on autonomy of decision-making for those involved in economic life. The vitality of more productive economies will be such as to make it possible to overcome the grave economic problems faced by the countries concerned.

The political and economic reforms will inevitably lead to new forms of co-operation between the European countries. The old psychological and physical barriers have been torn down. Ideas, information and people are circulating freely. The European peoples are rediscovering each other and growing closer.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Sound institutions, such as the Council of Europe and even the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, are the foundations on which the desire of Europeans to live together freely and in complete trust can grow.

In that connection, my Government attaches great importance to President Gorbachev's recent assurances that every country is free to choose its own path and that therefore no country can arrogate to itself the right to resort to force to impose its will on others. As that assurance is accompanied by the fact that the Soviet Union is being turned into a State where the rule of law is paramount, it takes on a particular significance.

The very encouraging prospects now seen in the negotiations on conventional weapons in Europe, which have been opened in Vienna, are a persuasive example of the new climate of convergence between the two parts of Europe. By lowering the levels of various categories of weapons, by pledging themselves to increased transparency and predictability in military questions and by defining new confidence-building measures based on strictly defensive strategies, the 23 countries concerned - indeed, the 35 associated with the negotiations - are putting an end to 45 years of suspicion and hostility.

We welcome the resumption of negotiations on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. As regards the negotiations on chemical weapons, President Bush's recent invitation, which the Soviet side has already accepted in principle, will make possible a real advance in this very complex area. We should take advantage of the momentum thus created and speedily conclude a balanced and verifiable agreement.

In Afghanistan, an important part of the Geneva Accords has been implemented with the withdrawal of Soviet troops, in accordance with the timetable laid down, thus putting an end to a foreign occupation which had lasted for more than

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

10 years. However, the situation continues to be very worrying, because of the deadly struggles still going on between different Afghan factions.

In Cambodia we await the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops by the end of this month. Here, as elsewhere, it seems to me desirable and even inevitable that our Organization should play a paramount role in the search for a peaceful solution and in its implementation.

It is regrettable that the Korean people is still not occupying a seat here as a Member, in violation of our Organization's principle of universality.

There are some encouraging signs with regard to the African continent.

A historic process is culminating in Namibia, thanks to the efforts of the United Nations. We welcome the fact that after the signing of the two agreements last December the implementation of the process laid down in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) has finally got under way. I have no doubt that that operation is beneficial for our Organization; it should give us inspiration for the future.

The gradual withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola also gives grounds for satisfaction. It is to be hoped that national reconciliation will now follow. A similar reconciliation effort in Mozambique also deserves our support. The same is true of the negotiations that the Government of Sudan is to undertake with the opposition in the south, as well as the negotiations that the Government of Ethiopia is conducting, on President Carter's initiative, with the representatives of the Eritrean people.

The painful problem of apartheid in South Africa still remains. The elections held at the beginning of this month showed that even among the white population large sections are in favour of change. It is up to the new leaders to carry out their mandate for reform, by immediately freeing Nelson Mandela and the other

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

leaders of the anti-apartheid movements, by ending the state of emergency and by legalizing the opposition parties and movements - in short, by putting an end to the régime of brutal repression, which still exists, and which caused so much violence in the recent elections.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

In Central America, the prospects of agreement have never been so good. After the conclusion of the Esquipulas II and Costa del Sol agreements and the recent meeting at Tela on the 7 August, the peace-making mechanism can now start up.

The promise of free elections in Nicaragua, next February, is also an extremely important element in this regard. In El Salvador, the dialogue between the opposing parties also seems to be under way.

Thus all the countries in this region have given effect to their intent to move towards democratic pluralism, respect for human rights, the promotion of social justice and resolution of the serious social economic problems that have been aggravated by 10 years of a pitiless warfare.

In contrast with Africa and Central America, in the Middle East we are witnessing a situation that is constantly deteriorating. The road towards a negotiated solution continues to be blocked. The uprising in the occupied territories is spreading. Day after day there is an increase in the confrontation together with an increase in the number of the dead and wounded and in the suffering of the general population. In the light of the decisions taken by the Security Council, the occupying forces continue to resort to repressive measures which are, inter alia, at variance with the Geneva Convention.

This is particularly regrettable since important changes have taken place in the last year: the decision taken by the Palestinian National Council recognizing the existence of Israel, to give up terrorism and to conduct negotiations on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council. The decision of the United States to recognize the existence of the Palestine Liberation Organization and to initiate a dialogue with its representatives is, likewise, an important step in the right direction.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Organizing elections in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, may prove a useful step, provided that it is seen to be part and parcel of an overall process and to the extent that the elections are held under acceptable international safeguards for both parties. The Palestinians have the same rights to existence and to self-determination as those which were demanded and won after so much suffering and tragic sacrifice by Israel.

We cannot be resigned to tragedy which is tightening the stranglehold on Lebanon day by day. The sufferings caused to the Lebanese population are of concern to us all. The coming about of the cease-fire and the resumption of dialogue between the various Lebanese communities, which are all equal in rights and obligations, as well as the withdrawal of all foreign forces, are two prerequisites to cessation of the civil war.

Between Iran and Iraq, the cease-fire has undoubtedly been respected. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to note that the negotiations being conducted by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative with the two parties have not yet yielded the slightest result. Nevertheless, there can be no valid alternative to seeking for a global solution, based on resolution 598 (1987) of the Security Council.

On the question of Cyprus, the Secretary-General has initiated a new series of intra-community negotiations and submitted to both parties proposals that are intended to be part of a settlement plan. My Government unreservedly supports the action of the Secretary-General and his representative with a view to the continuance and intensification of the negotiations.

The same is true of the conciliation which is being pursued by our Secretary-General with regard to the questions of Western Sahara and East Timor, in order to arrive at a solution based on respect for the aspirations of the peoples of those regions.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

The intensified search for agreements in various regional problems has led to a systematic resort to, and multiplication of, peace-keeping operations.

Congratulations are due to those United Nations officers who are able to assist in defining, deploying and conducting these operations with admirable skill and effectiveness. These operations are of inestimable service to the cause of peace. They guarantee to the United Nations an unprecedented authority and prestige. Nevertheless, they should not let us overlook the fact that they are only a temporary solution, intended to facilitate the implementation of a final settlement of those conflicts. Their smooth functioning also requires that each State faithfully fulfil its financial obligations, past or present. Regardless of its financial situation, my Government will study practical ways and means of contributing directly to the peace-keeping forces.

You may well imagine the feeling aroused by the craven execution of Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins in Lebanon, who was kidnapped in the course of his duties. This criminal act illustrates the dangers to which members of these international forces are vulnerable when exercising their mission.

The Government of Luxembourg, which is the outcome of recent elections, continues to attach extreme importance to respect for human rights.

More than 40 years ago, our General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At a time when we are celebrating the bicentennial of the French Revolution, it is extremely regrettable to note that more than 60 States, including some of the larger ones, have still not ratified the International Covenants on Human Rights. Furthermore, in many States where the provisions of these instruments are already in force, there is no adequate legal protection or any sufficiently effective sanction machinery to ensure that they are respected.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

For the Government of Luxembourg, the educational efforts needed to inform and to awaken the conscience of people and to promote a spirit of tolerance and justice, should be pursued and reinforced. The same is true of the disinterested action of non-governmental organizations that unreservedly commit themselves to promoting the cause of human rights, even going so far as to risk the lives of their members.

In the light of the considerable emotion which in recent years we have been accustomed to feel about certain countries that have little respect for human rights, I should like to add my voice to that of the international community, and call upon the leaders of those countries to put an end to repressive acts and to allow a return to a policy of openness and reform in keeping with the course of history.

Over and above the conflicts and the attacks on individuals, problems connected with the protection of the environment have become subjects of priority concern for universal public opinion: the statements which we have been listening to throughout this week provide clear evidence of this awareness.

More and more human beings are affected by the damage caused to ecological balances. The destruction of forests is accelerating, the desert is spreading. The erosion of the soil is threatening agricultural production and the existence of millions of human beings. The pollution of the seas and oceans, and the proliferation of toxic wastes is daily leading to new tragedies. The slow destruction of the ozone layer exposes us to ultraviolet radiation with incalculable consequences.

We are therefore firmly embarked on a course which is designed to prevent further deterioration of the environment. Initiatives successfully taken in recent months, particularly by Margaret Thatcher, Ruud Lubbers and Michel Rocard, as

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

we? as the Arche summit which met in Paris last July, have provided us with guidelines which should lead to urgent action. It is up to the international community at present, and therefore to our Organization, to define these priorities pending the holding of an international conference on the environment, which has been planned for 1992.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

My Government agrees entirely that there is a need to draw up a model convention to define the problem and to lay down the guidelines for international action through concrete measures.

The destruction of tropical forests by burning, which, in its turn, produces carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, should be halted. The rights of indigenous peoples, particularly along the Amazon, who want to preserve their natural environment should be respected.

A universal policy of protection and maintenance of forests should be launched. We shall succeed in this only if the courageous campaigns conducted by a number of movements working for the protection of the environment create a collective awareness of the situation.

It seems to me that this is a very favourable moment to lay the foundation for lasting growth based on a synthesis between the ecological dimension and man's economic activities. It is primarily up to the industrialized countries, which are mainly responsible for the problem, to meet this challenge, of concern to all mankind. The Organization should create structures that are sufficiently sound, flexible and effective to enable action to be taken when it is required.

Simultaneously, increased attention should be paid to the rapid growth of the world population, which is increasing at the rate of 1 billion every 16 years. This growth rate should be a cause of concern to us in the light of development possibilities and of the constraints that it will place upon the environment. In fact, the economic and social situation in a large number of developing countries remains disquieting. For millions of their inhabitants the 1980s have been a lost decade. This is particularly true of the countries of Latin America and of sub-Saharan Africa, where there has been stagnation and decline. Poverty, hunger

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

and deprivation are killing 40,000 children every day. That is a shameful situation, which no one can shrug off.

The simple struggle for survival has led large numbers of people in these countries to overexploit nature. The pressure from debt-servicing, which accounts for, on average, 30 per cent of their exports, has speeded up the excessive exploitation of their natural resources. In other words, short-term economic demands have prompted many Governments not to give ecological problems high priority. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that violence is increasing - indeed, taking on alarming dimensions. In the light of the situation to which they have been doomed, a number of young people are becoming drug addicts, prostitutes and delinquents and are indulging in new forms of criminality. The food riots that have taken place in some developing countries indicate clearly that young people are the victims of the upheavals that poverty has forced upon them. The number of refugees fleeing the warfare, persecution and terrorism, as well as unemployment and underdevelopment, increased from 5 million in 1978 to 14 million currently.

The scope of these problems means that we must redouble our efforts. In particular, the 1990 special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation will provide us with an opportunity to redefine the principles and guidelines for building a world that is fairer and more human. It seems that in order to remedy this situation, and to ensure lasting growth, a substantial reduction in debt and in the cost of debt-servicing would be an important initial step. Following the agreements concluded with Mexico and the Philippines, the Brady Plan could be applied on a broader scale, taking into account the specific features of each situation. In the case of world trade, if the Uruguay Round is successful - as we unreservedly hope that it will be - it is likely that it will create favourable conditions for an increase in exports from the developing countries.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Another evil, which is equally global and equally a threat, is the illicit trafficking in drugs. I urge a resolute strengthening of international co-operation, starting with the swift ratification, by all countries, of the Vienna Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which I have just signed on behalf of Luxembourg. It should be clear that Luxembourg, which is already participating in the working group that emerged from the summit meeting at the the Arche de la Défence, will spare no effort in this field. I take this opportunity to welcome the very courageous and determined action that has been taken by the President of Colombia, Mr. Virgilio Barco - action that the Government of Luxembourg supports unreservedly.

Before concluding, I should like to pay a just tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His activity at the head of the Organization, his tireless efforts at mediation and conciliation have revealed his great talent as an organizer and a negotiator. His patient and far-sighted commitment to peace has made a substantial contribution to strengthening the role and importance of the United Nations in international affairs in recent years.

My country has just celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its independence. I should like to thank the Secretary-General for having graced with his attendance the public events that took place last April in the presence of seven prime ministers and leaders of the main international organizations to which Luxembourg belongs. This celebration enabled us to relive the progress of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg through the vicissitudes of history. While noting that, in 1989, the future development of our country is surrounded by more favourable conditions than in the past, we must recognize that the life of small States in particular depends more and more on international organizations. Dealing precisely with the role of small States, the Secretary-General said on 18 April in Luxembourg:

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

"They do not need to think about the danger or cost of endless wars to realize the absurdity of all armed aggression. Being more aware of their vulnerability, small States, or at least those of them that behave rationally, are naturally peaceful and respectful of the law. They also feel more keenly than others the need for international co-operation, which is the purpose of our Organization. Like war, isolation for them would spell suicide. Living by international trade, they are aware of the dangers of protectionism, as well as the soundness of the liberalization of trade and the usefulness of being integrated in broad economic spaces where conflicts are no longer conceivable and where everyone can profit from overall prosperity. Also, they can gauge the importance of regional political co-operation and the international co-operation which it engenders. Luxembourg, therefore plays an even greater role in the United Nations because it is an active member of the European Community. Firm supporters of the Organization, small countries play a particularly useful part in it since they have experience in conciliation and because their interests generally coincide with the general interest."

After that lengthy quotation, I have nothing to add.

For what the Secretary-General has done at the head of the Organization, and for his presence in our country and the words he spoke there, I want simply, from the bottom of my heart, to express our complete gratitude.

Mr. VELAYATI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (spoke in Persian; English text furnished by the delegation): Let me at the outset offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Joseph Garba on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. I hope that under his leadership the Assembly will be able to achieve desirable results. To that end, he can rely on the co-operation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

My thanks go also to Mr. Dante Caputo for his able work during the forty-third session, as well as to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts at the United Nations and on the international and regional scene.

The demise of Imam Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic world and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran - may God be pleased with him - was a tragic loss for the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic world and all freedom-loving people. During many years of relentless struggle, he spared no effort to oppose exploitation, tyranny and injustice. Our people have entered the second decade of their revolution with precious experience gained from 10 years of resistance against aggression, political propaganda and economic pressure, and are now making great strides towards national reconstruction with resolute determination and reliance on the fundamental principles of the Islamic revolution.

As we approach the 1990s, the world is moving towards relaxation of tension both at the global and the regional levels. The international community's efforts to resolve regional conflicts are indeed commendable, but we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that there remain many unresolved disputes with the potential to threaten international peace and security. The principal cause of the perpetuation of these crises is the domineering policies pursued by the big Powers against the interests of third-world nations. In order to set this situation right, we must therefore alter unjust international relations and give them a basis of justice and respect for international law.

(Mr. Velayati, Islamic  
Republic of Iran)

The Non-Aligned Movement has called for the designation of the 1990s as the decade of international law. During that decade Governments and international forums should redouble their efforts to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international relations. History has shown that it is those with power and might who are more prone to violate principles of international law. Unlawful actions by the United States against my country - such as the seizure of our assets, attacks on our oil platforms and the downing of our civilian aircraft - are clear examples of disrespect for legal norms by those who possess power and might. It is our hope that in the next decade, with the efforts of the United Nations and a reassessment by the big Powers of their behaviour and conduct on the international scene, the ground will be laid for the rule of law.

Political and economic domination have been addressed at length in international forums, but what has not received adequate attention is cultural domination. The world-dominating Powers use cultural domination - a prelude to other forms of domination - to gain political influence and to alienate the nations of the third world from their social and cultural values. Unfortunately, nations that desire to return to their own cultural identity are subjected to severe attacks by the dominating Powers. Decisions by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement aimed at countering cultural domination by arrogant Powers in the Islamic world and the third world have ushered in a movement to eliminate that form of domination. Cultural attacks by some Western countries have been carried out as a result of an incorrect assessment of the realities and an underestimate of the strong feelings and beliefs of Muslim nations. During the presidency of France, the European Community can gain its rightful place in its relations with Muslim nations, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, by correcting its past political mistakes and by respecting the principles and social and religious values of Islamic societies.

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At this point I must address one of the destructive, devastating social tragedies of our time, namely, trafficking in and the production and use of drugs. The international community has rightly devoted special attention and displayed special sensitivity with respect to this problem. Iran is located geographically in a region that provides a link for a major part of the illicit drug trafficking from east to west. That has put a special burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect not only to the apprehension of international drug traffickers but also to safeguarding the health of our own society. To achieve this aim, we have begun during the past year to close the ways through which illicit drugs are brought into our country, by strengthening co-operation with neighbouring countries and expanding operations to discover and destroy international drug-trafficking networks. Those measures - supplemented by strict laws and heavier punishment for the merchants of death - have, in a short time, resulted in a considerable reduction in drug trafficking and consumption in Iran. But because of the nature of this phenomenon, an effective campaign against the international mafia of illicit drugs is not possible without international co-operation. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes international efforts to that end.

In the course of the past year, efforts to gain access to quantitatively larger and qualitatively better weapons have continued unabated, while at the same time multilateral negotiations on disarmament with the ultimate purpose of achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control have continued with undiminished momentum. It appears, however, that the speed at which weapons are amassed is much faster than the pace of efforts in the field of disarmament. Meanwhile, chemical weapons have become comparable, in terms of their

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capacity for mass destruction and their brutal nature, to nuclear weapons, and pose a grave threat to regional and international peace and security, arousing serious concern on the part of the international community.

Eight years of global indifference to the use of chemical weapons against the Islamic Republic of Iran has encouraged some countries such as Iraq to build the largest arsenals of chemical and biological weapons and to improve them qualitatively and quantitatively.

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The international community's failure to respond properly to Iraq's repeated use of chemical weapons against its Kurdish citizens, during the war and even after the establishment of the cease-fire, as well as ascertainment of their practical advantages have caused world-wide concern over the increasing escalation of such weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country that has suffered the most from the recent use of chemical weapons, is convinced that the ultimate remedy lies in the total destruction of all chemical weapons and that such transitory solutions as the prevention of the proliferation of such weapons will not be effective.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has expanded its efforts in the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the production, development, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. The principle of universality is an absolute necessity for ensuring the security of States that have been the victims of chemical-weapon use and those that are potentially subject to be threatened by such weapons. The universality of such a convention requires adequate punitive provisions as well as sufficient incentives. Pending the conclusion of the convention all States are bound to abide by the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and delinquent States must be punished immediately after first use.

More than a year has elapsed since the establishment of the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. With the utmost regret I must declare that, despite 15 rounds of direct talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General and the with the assistance of his Personal Representative, no step other than the establishment of the cease-fire has been taken for the full implementation of even the first paragraph of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). In paragraph 1 of

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that resolution, the Security Council demands that

"as a first step towards a negotiated settlement, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire ... and withdraw all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without delay".

That paragraph, which is fully in line with the most fundamental principles of international law, leaves no room for doubt or for self-serving interpretations, since both the cease-fire and withdrawal to internationally recognized boundaries are mandatory measures that need to be taken unconditionally prior to and independent of any negotiations.

On that basis the Secretary-General in his proposed timetable of July and August 1988, envisaged that withdrawal to internationally recognized boundaries should take place within 13 days after the cease-fire. The Islamic Republic of Iran agreed in principle with that timetable, which includes timing and procedure for the implementation of all the provisions of resolution 598 (1987). Iraq, however, refused even to consider that timetable and continued to insist on its prerequisite of direct talks prior to the cease-fire. Even after the announcement of the cease-fire and prior to its establishment, the Secretary-General, in his letter of 16 August 1989 to Iran and Iraq, called upon the two countries to begin withdrawal simultaneously with direct talks.

During the past year Iraq has refused to take the very first step in fulfilment of its obligations under the United Nations Charter and the Security Council resolution, namely, withdrawal from the territory of Iran. On the contrary, Iraq has tried to take advantage of its illegal occupation of the territory of Iran to realize the illegitimate and expansionist ambitions for which it launched a war of aggression against its neighbour. On the other hand, Iraq

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tries to deceive world public opinion by raising the issue of prisoners of war - a purely humanitarian issue - and utilizing it in its campaign of deception.

A selective approach to the implementation of the provisions of resolution 598 (1987) is not acceptable. According to the letter of the resolution, withdrawal must take place prior to and independent of negotiations. Nevertheless, out of purely humanitarian considerations we have declared that we stand ready to exchange prisoners of war according to the plan proposed by the Secretary-General. On the basis of the first plan, all prisoners of war should have been released by 20 November 1988, and according to the October plan all of them should have returned to their homes by the end of 1988. The Islamic Republic of Iran has declared its acceptance in principle to both plans; Iraq has failed to accept either plan.

I should also mention at this point that there is an imbalance in the number of prisoners of war registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the two countries. Iraq authorities have up until now admitted the capture of about 45,000 Iranian prisoners of war. Of that number, only 19,000 have been registered, while approximately 50,000 prisoners of war have been registered in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which constitutes the majority of Iraqi prisoners of war. That imbalance needs to be remedied soon.

We are prepared to continue direct talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General. It has now become clear that the problem does not lie in the form of the talks or in the lack of confidence between the two countries. The real problem lies in Iraq's refusal to implement the Security Council resolution. As long as there is no serious reaction to this dangerous and illegal stance of Iraq it is highly improbable that we will see progress in the implementation of the resolution, and dwelling on side issues will produce no results. The

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responsibility is incumbent particularly upon the Security Council, given its commitment in its resolution. However, the world has witnessed with great surprise that the same Security Council that adopted resolution 598 (1987) with much international fanfare has not taken a single step to help with the implementation of that resolution. Rather, it has chosen to watch with total indifference the continued occupation of Iranian territory and the non-implementation of resolution 598 (1987).

Iraq must realize that peace is to the benefit of the two countries and the region. The continuation of the present "no peace no war" situation can gradually move the region towards a resumption of tension. We are earnest and serious in our determination for peace between the two countries and for stability in the Persian Gulf region. We stand ready to implement resolution 598 (1987) without delay and free from preconditions and excuses. The 1 October plan was proposed after long discussion with the two sides and consultation with the Secretary-General. We accepted that plan despite our comments solely to help the Secretary-General discharge his duties in the implementation of the resolution and because of our confidence in him. Iraq, however, has so far refused to accept the plan. We welcome the visit of Mr. Eliasson, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, to the two countries. But if those efforts do not lead within a reasonable time to a change in Iraq's stance, other measures must be contemplated.

I now wish to touch upon a number of points regarding peace and security in the sensitive and strategic region of the Persian Gulf. Without doubt the security of that region is closely linked to international peace and security. We believe that durable peace and security should be provided by the States of the region, without foreign interference.

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Common religious, cultural and economic grounds among the Persian Gulf countries provide the essential motivation for their greater solidarity as well as the needed strength and power for the maintenance of security in the region without the presence or interference of foreign Powers.

The Islamic Republic of Iran desires to expand bilateral relations with the countries of the region on the basis of mutual respect for legitimate rights and interests, and endeavours to provide a solid foundation for a durable peace and security without the presence and interference of foreign Powers in the Persian Gulf.

The complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan was welcomed by us and by the international community. The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently insisted on the indisputable right of the people of Afghanistan to self-determination and to choose their future form of government. While declaring anew our support for the struggle of the Muslim people of Afghanistan, we stress the need for the creation of an Islamic, popular and non-aligned government that will be free of foreign interference and friendly to all its neighbours, a government which can be realized only with the unity of all segments of the Muslim people of Afghanistan. We shall continue to exert our utmost effort towards that end. We will continue, as we have done in the past, with humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees in keeping with our Islamic and humanitarian responsibility. We hope, however, that with the final resolution of the Afghanistan problem and an improvement in social and political conditions the road will be paved for the honourable and voluntary repatriation of refugees and displaced persons.

Last year the oppressed people of Palestine and Lebanon witnessed important and extensive developments. The uprising of the Muslim people of Palestine in the West Bank and on the Gaza Strip, which has lasted for more than 20 months, and

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other resistance movements of the Palestinians, are a natural consequence of neglecting the inalienable rights of the people of this land. The people of Palestine continue to resist valiantly and resolutely in the face of the aggressive and criminal practices of the Quds-occupier régime which seeks brutally to suppress the uprising by beating, killing and torturing a large number of revolutionaries. The continuation of this uprising has shown that under no circumstances will the Muslim people of Palestine be ready to accept compromises on their inalienable rights.

If the international community seeks to find a solution to this crisis and to bring about peace and security in the Middle East, it should realize that the only viable remedy lies in the full restoration of the rights of Palestinians, or, in other words, the liberation of the occupied territories and the establishment of an independent State in the entire territory of Palestine. Any solution that falls short of meeting the legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine cannot guarantee peace and security in this region.

Expansionist acts of aggression by the Zionist régime have widened the scope of the crisis also to Lebanon. The occupation of southern Lebanon, the creation of instability in the region, the suppression of Lebanese and Palestinian resistance groups, the abduction of persons and personalities such as Sheikh Abdul Al-Karim Obeid, and the use of puppets and mercenaries have contributed to further aggravation of the crisis in Lebanon, a country that has already suffered much destruction. As if that were not enough, Iraq has also fanned the flames of a destructive civil war in Lebanon by pouring armaments into that country, adding to the number of human losses and subjecting that nation to the peril of partitioning. While emphasizing independence and territorial

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integrity and the need to respect Lebanon's right to self-determination on the basis of the will of the majority of that nation, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the resistance of Islamic and nationalist forces in Lebanon against the Zionist régime's acts of aggression.

After many years of struggle, the people of Namibia are now looking forward to taking their destiny into their own hands. We once again declare our full support for the independence of Namibia and call for the holding of a free election and for the prevention of the Pretoria régime's exercise of influence in the election process. Therefore, the immediate withdrawal of South African police forces from Namibia is essential. The international community should continue to give its support to the independence process in Namibia and to the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) by making financial assistance available to that organization so that true representatives of the people of Namibia can assume power.

Reassuring developments on the world scene and an improvement in the international political climate concerning some of the problems and crises that I have touched upon have thrust the international community into an era of anxiety tempered by hope. Weathering this era and removing these anxieties will depend to a large extent on the far-reaching and serious efforts made by international forums and in particular by the United Nations.

I hope this session will see significant, practical and effective steps taken towards the attainment of those goals.

Mr. SAHLOUL (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Garba of Nigeria most warmly on his election as President of the General Assembly. His election reflects the confidence the international community reposes in him and is a tribute to his country, Nigeria,

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with which the Sudan enjoys warm, close and friendly relations. We are sure that he will guide the work of the Assembly in a successful manner and with fruitful results.

I also express the deep gratitude of my delegation to his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the great ability with which he carried out his stewardship of the forty-third session.

We would also like to renew our thanks and gratitude to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the invaluable efforts which he has exerted in order to strengthen international peace and security.

The Assembly is, I am sure, well aware of the latest political developments in Sudan. These developments aim at rectifying the situation in our country on the bases accepted by our people. These are: the principles of good-neighbourliness; the peaceful settlement of disputes; the promotion of mutual co-operation at regional and international levels; the deepening of the principles of non-alignment; respect for international instruments; and the peaceful solution of problems that confront our country. In this connection it must be noted that current initiatives and efforts aimed at solving the problems of the Horn of Africa by peaceful means receive the full support of my Government. We hope that these initiatives will bring about stability and complementary security in the region within the framework of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region.

The quest for peace in the Sudan has been and still is one of the main priorities of my Government. Peace, in our view, should be achieved through direct negotiations and dialogue. These have already commenced and we hope they will be pursued until lasting peace, national unity and stability prevail in our country.

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The Sudan is still faced with enormously complex economic and social problems. The Assembly at its forty-third session dealt with some aspects of these problems in adopting a resolution on emergency economic assistance to Sudan following the rains and flood disasters. The Assembly also adopted a resolution on special assistance for the problem of displaced persons. And in the past year the international community accorded priority to the largest humanitarian relief operation in the region when the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched Operation Life-line in the Sudan to save thousands of people in the southern regions from starvation and death.

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While Sudan is grateful to the Secretary-General and the international community for providing this highly appreciated assistance in our ordeal, we look forward to continued efforts by the international community to implement the resolutions adopted by the Assembly at its forty-third session which called for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the infrastructure destroyed during the rains and flood disasters. This is in accordance with the commitments that were undertaken last November. International assistance should also be extended to the displaced southern Sudanese in the Eastern and Western Sudan when primary factors of production are available, so as to enable them to be self-sufficient. It is also our view that assistance in the medical and health fields should be continued.

In talking about the great success scored by Operation Life-Line Sudan, particularly in protecting the citizens in that part of the homeland from a devastating famine during this autumn, we should not forget the strenuous efforts exerted and the pioneering role assumed by Mr. James P. Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), who led the operation in his capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Representative, and his colleagues. Indeed, Operation Life-Line Sudan would not have succeeded had it not been for the positive response and support that Sudan received from donor States and various voluntary organizations, in particular from the United States of America, the European Economic Community and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

My Government fully understands the human dimension of Operation Life-Line Sudan and is firmly committed to the need for the continuation of the international effort to realize the objectives spelled out in the Khartoum Plan of Action. It is for this reason that my delegation will submit, at the current session of this Assembly, a draft resolution calling on the international community to demonstrate its solidarity with and support for Operation Life-Line Sudan in its upcoming phase devoted to rehabilitation projects.

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The last few years have witnessed a renewed interest in peaceful accommodation by the two super-Powers and the relaxation of tension in international relations. The intention of the various parties to resolve conflict in international relations through peaceful negotiations has been confirmed. This favourable international climate enabled the United Nations to play its predictable role with efficacy and considerable success. The United Nations has made valuable and constructive contributions in this regard. Yet more is expected from the United Nations by way of the realization and strengthening of international peace and security.

These new beginnings have evolved to create an international climate that is favourable to stability and requires increased mobilization for its consolidation. Sudan therefore welcomes the progress achieved in the area of disarmament and the concrete proposals made to reduce armaments. Sudan also welcomes the constructive proposals recently announced by the two super-Powers on chemical and medium-range weapons.

The beginning of this month witnessed the convening of the Ninth Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries during which the Heads of State and Government adopted important decisions aimed at consolidating peace and boosting the prosperity of mankind. In welcoming all these efforts we hope they will evolve into concrete achievements that will realize the basic aspiration of the international community to avert the dangers of armament and war. This new rapprochement and political, cultural and economic co-operation between countries and groups with different political systems will give impetus to the consolidation of international peace and security - all the more so when it becomes evident that the mutual interests that bind people and countries are stronger than the political and ideological differences or disputes over narrow interests. These positive trends are ushering in a new era for mankind and we trust that all will duly contribute to it.

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Since the General Assembly met last year in its historic session at Geneva and the international community's recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on its own soil, the Palestinian people, under the leadership of its sole, legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and by the Group of Arab States has demonstrated its acceptance of the international community's decisions as all the United Nations resolutions with a view to paving the way to a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

For its part, Israel continues to challenge the international community and flout United Nations resolutions. This makes Israel the main party responsible for the deterioration of the situation and the escalation of the conflict. As a result of this obdurate Israeli attitude, the Palestinian problem, unlike other problems in other tension areas, has not shown any progress towards a just and comprehensive settlement that preserves the rights of all parties.

What Israel purports to present as an election plan is no more than a plan to consecrate its occupation that daily escalates its bloody and oppressive practices against the Palestinian people. Elections are based on the idea of free will, but what free will is there for a people denied the right to self-determination?

The intifadah of the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine is the glowing culmination of a long, valiant and courageous struggle. The will of the Palestinian people will not be sapped by Israeli occupation. The intifadah proves that the denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people will lead only to deadlock. The international community has no option but to strive in an effective way to force Israel to comply with its rule and implement United Nations resolutions regarding Palestine and Israel's withdrawal from Palestinian land and all occupied Arab territories.

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My country continues to follow with grave concern the bloody events to which the sisterly people of Lebanon are subjected. However, the recent success of the Arab Tripartite Committee to convene the Lebanese House of Representatives and the meeting of the Security Committee give us cause for optimism regarding prospects of an agreement that will bring about peace and security in Lebanon.

The present situation in southern Africa is of grave concern to us. The Brazzaville Protocol and the New York Agreements of last year sparked hopes for a full implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia. But the Pretoria régime is manipulating the implementation of the independence plan and persistently violates its text and spirit in an attempt to weaken the political position of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and ensure its own future hegemony over, and colonial rule of, Namibia even after completion of the plan.

South Africa has not dismantled neither Koevoet nor the South West Africa Territorial Force, which are still actively terrorizing the people of Namibia by every means. Those terrorist strike forces are a real and very serious threat to the security and safety of the leaders and members of SWAPO and to their legitimate political activity.

Some of the repressive and discriminatory laws are still in force, for instance the AG-8. Some political prisoners are still behind bars and amnesty is restricted to Namibians in exile and does not include Namibians inside their country, which leaves them exposed to threat and terror by the State.

With the elections in sight next November, South Africa is already manipulating the process to rig the elections. The Voters Registration Act, exclusively set up by the Pretoria régime, allowed the moving of thousands of white South Africans into Namibia and registering them there for the elections. South

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African military and police staff and civil servants of the colonial rule stationed in Namibia can also register and vote. South Africa's Administrator General has introduced two pieces of legislation that are a flagrant and grave violation of the principles of free and fair elections. The draft on elections does not provide for the secret vote and has loopholes that allow rigging in vote counting.

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The draft on the Constituent Assembly effectively denies the people of Namibia its right to self-determination as it installs the Administrator General as president of the Assembly with veto power.

The international community is now required, more than ever before, to monitor closely the independence plan for Namibia. We call on the Security Council to fully assume its responsibilities as stated in its resolutions 435 (1978) and 640 (1989). Enough funds and facilities must be made available to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to enable it to fulfill its assigned duties. The massive popular reception that SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma received at home this week proves beyond doubt the full support of the people of Namibia for SWAPO. This support will certainly be reflected in the results of the forthcoming elections, if the international community guarantees that they are truly free and fair.

The situation in South Africa remains the same, despite political changes there. Apartheid is still in place. The Pretoria Government is still most aggressively repressing the resistance of the people of South Africa to this notorious system and refusing to heed the universal demand of the international community that it release the militant leader Nelson Mandela and his comrades. Condemnation is not enough. Nominal support of the struggle of the people of South Africa is not enough. The international community is required to confront the racist régime and strictly implement its boycott in order to completely isolate it and enable the people of South Africa, under the leadership of its legitimate representatives, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), to gain its legitimate rights.

The international community has witnessed with great appreciation the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General which have resulted in the

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establishment of a cease-fire in the long, bitter and destructive war between Iraq and Iran. Although this achievement created hopes and optimism, we observe with concern the lack of progress in the negotiations between the two parties to the conflict. We call upon the two countries to confirm their peaceful intentions and respond positively to the efforts of the international community represented by the United Nations, and to work constructively to resolve the complications of the war and settle the conflict comprehensively and conclusively by peaceful means within the framework, and through full implementation, of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). This settlement, we believe, is an essential precondition for repairing the ravages of war and mobilizing both countries' potential for reconstruction and the national welfare.

The Geneva accords reached in 1987 between the parties to the Afghan question and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country raised hopes that national reconciliation in Afghanistan was imminent, but it has not materialized so far. We call upon all the Afghan parties concerned to contribute constructively to reaching national reconciliation and unity without which neither security, stability nor reconstruction can be achieved.

We carefully observe the recent developments in Cambodia and call upon all parties to work sincerely to achieve the goals that will realize the aspirations of the people of Cambodia for independence, sovereignty and national unity.

We hope to see the Korean people move towards achieving their aspiration to reunify their homeland through peaceful means, free from foreign interference.

We hope that the initiatives for reconciliation and the elimination of tension in Central and South America will lead to general and comprehensive security and peace and thus contribute to the stability and development of the region. This

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prompts us to speak of the dangers to which Colombia is exposed because of its war against the mafias of illicit traffic in drugs. We hope the international community will support the Government of Colombia in its attempt to root out drug trafficking, which is a threat to security and stability in the region.

The international scene has witnessed rapprochement between the two super-Powers, and peace has been achieved in many places in the world, but this is not reflected in the fields of international economic co-operation. We hope that the monies released by arms reduction will be put into programmes of economic and social development in the developing countries within the framework of international economic co-operation.

The priority in this direction is to set up a just international economic and monetary system that will help these countries to overcome backwardness, poverty and stagnation. This cannot be done unless the international community fully assumes its responsibilities and seriously exercises political determination in addressing problems of growth and development in the developing countries. Foreign debt is the primary obstacle to any effort to promote economic growth. The Sudan recognizes the encouraging initiatives of some creditor countries and deems that efforts in this sphere are not enough; they must be supplemented by effective steps to accelerate financial flows into the developing countries to support their national developmental efforts and expand their economic capacity. These steps are necessary to enable those countries to embark on the course of repaying their debts and to activate broader, more comprehensive co-operation to the benefit of both debtors and creditors.

The conception of economic and technical co-operation has become an integral part of the general political awareness in the developing countries. The changing scene of the international economy offers opportunities for co-operation that must be utilized through a forthright dialogue between the rich and the poor countries

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to the benefit of both. Efforts must be made to control the net flow of resources from the developing countries to the developed countries and the multilateral financial institutions, thus depriving the developing countries of vitally needed resources. The progressive drop in the international prices of primary commodities is of grave concern to the developing countries, and we hope that the establishment, last June, of the Common Fund for Commodities will contribute to improving the present state of trade in primary commodities. We welcome the global system of trade preferences and consider it a necessity to strengthen its mechanism in favour of the developing countries, particularly considering the current trend of protectionism.

Having passed through the "lost eighties", the developing countries view with hope and optimism the nineties, the fourth decade of the International Development Strategy, when the lessons of the past will indeed help in setting new concepts of international economic solidarity. We look forward to the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, especially in developing countries, and to the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris. We consider them important steps towards establishing the solidarity of rich and poor countries for development, elimination of poverty and consolidation of the basis for self-reliance.

We should like to draw attention to the dangerous situation resulting from environmental deterioration, particularly desertification, drought, ecological imbalance, climatic changes and the depletion of the ozone layer. We also draw attention to the dangers of exporting nuclear and industrial waste and dumping them in the developing countries. We call upon the whole international community to bear jointly the common responsibility to control environmental deterioration and

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share its burden, while noting the necessity of achieving sustained and ecologically safe development.

The many important and urgent matters on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly and the favourable international climate offer a great opportunity for the international community to confirm its sincere commitment to the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

This will promote the efficiency of the Organization and is a guarantee of the establishment of international peace and security and the enhancement of international co-operation in all other fields.

Finally, we hope that this session will achieve fruitful results which will make it a landmark in the annals of our collective effort.

Mr. KAMIKAMICA (Fiji): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Fiji, I extend to Ambassador Garba our warmest congratulations on his election to the high office of President of the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

His unanimous election is without doubt a recognition of the esteem in which he is held personally; it concomitantly reflects the high regard we all have for his great country, the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

We are confident that his distinguished leadership will guide this forty-fourth session to a most successful conclusion. And the success that we achieve at this session will strengthen the supportive climate for international relations and further instil the need to interact positively among ourselves so as to solidify the basis for permanent international peace.

The General Assembly is a meeting of representatives of sovereign nations and, in a sense, is about how we can enhance relationships and co-operation, how we can promote economic and social progress and how we can live in peace with one another.

The world is now poised on the threshold of the last decade of the twentieth century and we will soon enter a new millennium. But what of the old century? The twentieth century has seen mankind suffer from two global wars, one of which was described as "the war to end all wars". Fifty years have now passed since the Second World War and, despite only limited conflicts and a period of cold war, we have witnessed the development of massive arsenals.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

On the positive side, we have seen phenomenal advances in science and technology, enabling man to land on the Moon and taking him to the final frontier, space. Scientific developments have helped improve living standards, increased agricultural and industrial production, and have added years to our lives.

The story of mankind is, however, not simple and our achievements will pale into insignificance if the international community cannot come to terms with itself. In this regard, it is gratifying to note that international tensions are beginning to wane, that major conflicts which have afflicted certain parts of the world appear to be in the process of resolution, in many cases using the good offices of our Secretary-General.

It is a tragedy that, while the Iran-Iraq war has seen an end to fighting, another country in the Middle East remains torn by strife. How much longer will the people of Lebanon be subjected to a life of violence and insecurity? The United Nations, in an effort to eliminate suffering and pursue peace in Lebanon, sent what was to be an "interim force" which has now been in that country for over 11 years. The mediation of the Tripartite High Level Arab Committee is welcomed and we earnestly hope that it can find a durable solution to the issues.

Fiji continues to support the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and to a homeland, while at the same time recognizing Israel's right to exist as a State within secure boundaries.

My delegation welcomes the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, which, we earnestly hope, will lead to the restoration of peace and to reconstruction in that ravaged country. The central role of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will be crucial in this regard and deserves the fullest support of the international community.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

It is also pleasing to note the new dialogue between the two Koreas which we sincerely hope will reduce the obstacles to peaceful reunification. However, as we have said in the past, we believe that in the meantime neither of the two should be denied the right to join this Organization.

My delegation welcomes the recent developments in Namibia. It is most gratifying to see that, after years of international criticism and condemnation, South Africa has finally renounced its intransigence and agreed to let the people of Namibia achieve their cherished dream of independence. We look forward to the early admission of Namibia into the United Nations.

My delegation renews its call to South Africa to bring a speedy end to the abhorrent and inhuman policy of apartheid and grant to the black South African people their right to play an effective role in the government of their country. We will continue to support the measures being pursued by the international community to dismantle apartheid in South Africa, including the banning of sports contacts with South Africa.

We welcome the recent initiatives being taken to bring peace and stability to Central America.

As I said earlier, the twentieth century could be looked upon as the century of world wars. The creation of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, clearly manifested man's desire not merely for lasting peace, but also for social and economic benefits for all mankind. And while with all our hearts we sincerely desire permanent and secure peace, ironically, this noble objective has continued to elude us.

It has been argued that the possession of arsenals of nuclear weapons has created a régime of peace based on a balance of nuclear power. But the build-up of

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nuclear weapons only takes us closer to the edge of the holocaust. It is therefore important that the dialogue, discussions and active reduction of nuclear weapons should continue.

My country is committed to permanent and secure peace in our world. In pursuit of that commitment, Fiji has fully supported the United Nations in its peace-keeping activities. We have contributed troops for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and for the United Nations Good Offices Mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) and, most recently, policemen for the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. Some 23 of my countrymen have paid the ultimate price while serving under the banner of the United Nations.

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Decolonization, which has been one of the outstanding achievements of the United Nations, is reaching its final hour. My delegation welcomes the positive developments in New Caledonia. We are confident that France will honour the commitment made in the Matignon Agreement to give the people of that Territory the right to exercise their will through a free and genuine act of self-determination in accordance with the principles and practices established by the United Nations.

We are, however, indeed sorry that when that day comes one of the champions of the independence movement in New Caledonia, Mr. Jean Marie Tjibaou, will not be there to witness it. We in the Pacific were shocked to learn of the assassination of Mr. Tjibaou with his Deputy, Mr. Yeiwene Yeiwene. Mr. Tjibaou had become a familiar figure in the corridors of the United Nations, championing with dignity and forcefulness the cause of his people. He will be missed by us all.

The South Pacific is a relatively calm and peaceful region. We have pursued a number of initiatives to ensure maintenance of that situation. For example, we have established the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty - or the Treaty of Rarotonga, as it is more commonly known. Regrettably, however, France continues to carry out nuclear testing in the region. Its action has earned the strongest condemnation by all countries in the South Pacific. When the French Prime Minister visited Fiji last month, I reiterated our concern when I told him:

"If I were to ask only one thing of you, Mr. Prime Minister, my plea would be simple: please put an end to your nuclear-testing programme in the Pacific".

Many of the Pacific Island countries depend almost entirely on the sea for their sustenance. Continued nuclear testing seriously threatens the resources on which they depend.

Another danger posed to our food supply and economic sustenance is the indiscriminate exploitation of our marine resources by drift-net fishing or the

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"wall of death" constructed by distant water fishing fleets. It is the unanimous position of the South Pacific Forum that this practice must stop.

There is a third danger which threatens our environment. The phenomenon called "the greenhouse effect" or "global warming" is likely to cause a rise in sea levels which would submerge many of the low-lying islands in the Pacific and elsewhere. This issue must continue to be addressed by the international community as a matter of urgency.

It is important for us to preserve, protect and promote our indigenous natural resources. And if it is important for us to preserve and protect our indigenous natural resources, then it is even more important for us to protect our indigenous human resources, our indigenous and tribal peoples - their special rights, their traditions, their culture.

In that regard, the international community has been concerned about these issues. The rights of indigenous and tribal peoples are guaranteed and protected under the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention of 1957 and under the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of 1989.

Permit me to make a few remarks on the situation in my country.

At the heart of the two military actions in 1987 in Fiji were the concern and fear of the indigenous Fijian people about their future.

The indigenous Fijians settled in the islands of Fiji more than 3,500 years ago. Immigration into Fiji during the early part of the British colonial administration led to a situation where, before the founding of the United Nations, the indigenous Fijian people had become a minority in their own country.

With the abrogation of the 1970 Constitution in October 1987 and the institution of an interim civilian Government in December 1987, there began the sensitive task of drafting a new Constitution which would guarantee and protect the

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special rights of the indigenous Fiji people while at the same time addressing the rights and interests of the other communities in Fiji. The Interim Government prepared a draft Constitution. Subsequently, a Constitutional Inquiry and Advisory Committee was set up to receive the views and opinions of the people on a new Constitution. This 16-member Committee was made up of eminent persons in Fiji; it comprised six Indians, five Fijians, four from other races and one Rotuman, who was the Chairman. After conducting hearings throughout the country and receiving written and oral submissions over a period of eight months, and after deliberating over its report for a further three months, the Committee submitted a unanimous report to the Interim Government. It recommended, inter alia, a two-chamber parliament of Fiji - a house of representatives comprising 37 Fijians, 27 Indians, four from other races and one Rotuman; and a 34-member senate consisting of chiefs and prominent citizens from other communities.

The Interim Government released the report of the Constitutional Inquiry and Advisory Committee for public information earlier this month. The Fiji Times, independently controlled and the only English daily newspaper in Fiji at the time, said in its editorial:

"The Constitutional Inquiry and Advisory Committee has produced a generally balanced report after an exhaustive nation-wide enquiry. It is certainly not going to please everyone but the Committee, working within its terms of reference, has presented a compromise package that it hopes will be acceptable to all different communities ...

"It recognizes that its package is by no means perfect - that is why it recommends a review within seven years - but makes out a strong case for its acceptance now as a workable document, and workable it is".

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The Interim Government is now considering the report and recommendations of the independent, multi-racial Constitutional Inquiry and Advisory Committee. The Interim Government is committed to guaranteeing and protecting the rights of the indigenous Fijian people through majority representation in parliament and is also committed to ensuring that the new Constitution will fully guarantee and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all the citizens of Fiji.

The solution to the constitutional situation in our country is a matter for our own people to resolve. That we are doing. One of the pillars of international relations is the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Interference from outside, as has been demonstrated elsewhere, will make the achieving of an early and acceptable resolution of the situation in Fiji more difficult.

Finally, as we enter a new decade and are poised on the threshold of a new millenium, it is the earnest hope of my delegation, my my country, that the many difficulties which now confront us can be resolved; that the nations of the world, with understanding, good will and friendship, can work together in unity to foster international co-operation, facilitate social and economic development and lay the foundations for permanent and secure peace for ourselves and for the sake of generations yet unborn.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. BROCHAND (France) (interpretation from French): In the statement just made by the representative of Fiji, he spoke of my country and the underground nuclear tests that France is undertaking in its own territory in Polynesia. My delegation wishes once again to recall that the French nuclear underground experiments - the underground experiments, I repeat - in no way harm either the interests of the States of the region or the health of the people that live there or the environment, as several scientific commissions have clearly demonstrated on the spot.

The studies that those commissions have carried out are, in fact, available to everyone. Since the representative of Fiji also quoted the statement he made to the Minister of the French Government, when the Minister recently visited his country - and I am pleased to mention that that visit took place in an excellent climate of friendship and co-operation - I will venture to remind the representative of Fiji in my turn that in reply to his statement Mr. Rocard, the French Minister, gave the Fiji authorities the same unreserved assurances that I myself have just repeated.

Mr. KAMIKAMICA (Fiji): It is the position of my delegation that the sustenance of life and the preservation of our environment are of equal importance to security considerations. My delegation's position is further based on scientific reports carried out by three independent scientific study teams which

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were allowed to study Mururoa. We believe that the French Government should authorize a further scientific study for the benefit of the South Pacific region under the supervision of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.