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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 2 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. GARBA	(Nigeria)
later:	Mr. HURST (Vice-President)	(Antigua and Barbuda)
later:	Mr. MUDENGE (Vice-President)	(Zimbabwe)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [129] (continued)
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Herbert (Saint Kitts and Nevis)  
Mr. El-Talhy (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)  
Mr. Kasim (Jordan)  
Mr. Traore (Guinea)

Address by Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, Prime Minister of New Zealand

Statements made by

Mr. Wijeratne (Sri Lanka)  
Mr. Bongo (Gabon)  
Mr. Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 129 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
(A/44/535/Add.2)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/44/535/Add.2, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 19 and 26 September 1989, the Dominican Republic has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. HERBERT (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Mr. President, let me on behalf of the delegation of Saint Kitts and Nevis congratulate you on your election to office. My delegation has absolute confidence in your abilities and those of the Vice Presidents, and we pledge our full support and co-operation.

I seize this opportunity to pay tribute to our distinguished Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the diligence, commitment and perseverance he has displayed in working untiringly in the cause of peace. His efforts have been crowned with success. It is a success, however, which can be very fragile if it is not bolstered by the determination of the international community to support the cause of peace everywhere in the world.

Mr. President, I bring you warmest greetings from the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Right Honourable Dr. Kennedy Alphonse Simmonds, who had made all the arrangements to be here in this august body. You will appreciate that a

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tragic disaster has kept him at home. It was the seventeenth day of September, just two days before the sixth anniversary of the independence of our nation. All arrangements for the celebration were completed; many calls and expressions of congratulation were arriving from the family of nations. Suddenly we were struck by a horrendous hurricane called Hugo that left a path of death, destruction, tragedy and homelessness in the eastern Caribbean.

We in Saint Kitts and Nevis had proudly enjoyed a 5.8 per cent annual rate of growth in our economy over the past five years. We had developed our infrastructure to ensure a better way of life for every man, woman and child in our country, while adhering to the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Suddenly we found ourselves faced with the stark reality that the hands of the clock had been turned back and that it would be a number of years before we could repair the damage done by Hugo. A statement on hurricane Hugo has already been made to the General Committee by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of his Government and those of Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis, and I do not wish to burden this Assembly with our tale of woe. Suffice it to say that one cannot describe the tragedy that resulted after being buffeted continuously for over 10 hours by winds of some 140 miles per hour accompanied by some 10 inches of rainfall. Hundreds of persons are homeless and living in emergency shelters. Hospitals have been extensively damaged. Schools, churches, colleges, factories, police stations and ports have been destroyed. Electricity poles and wires were blown down, the water system damaged. Huge trees were uprooted and crops destroyed.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis, I must thank the various countries and agencies of the United Nations for the speedy assistance rendered. However, I wish to emphasize that to deal with the situation in the short term is not enough, and I call upon all members to help in the long-term rehabilitation of our infrastructure.

We have been fortunate in restoring the infrastructure for the tourism sector, so we can attempt to balance the loss in agriculture and light industry.

I turn now to the international scene, which seems to have some rays of light owing, in large part, to this Organization, so ably spearheaded by the Secretary-General.

In this context my delegation welcomes the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq. We commend the role of the Secretary-General and the United Nations forces stationed there for working towards maintaining the cessation of hostilities and in continuously monitoring the situation there.

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The task of the peace-keeping forces in that area and elsewhere is a vital but hazardous one which obviously requires extensive monetary resources for effective functioning. We call upon the economically strong and powerful States within the United Nations system to meet their obligations to the Organization so that it may carry out its mandate for peace with greater efficiency.

In Afghanistan the conflict still smoulders. I appeal for an end to civil strife in that troubled country. I reiterate the need for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. There is a need for greater dialogue among the various internal factions, and for the creation of a political climate conducive to enabling Afghan refugees to return to their homeland. In the final analysis the peaceful resolution of the Afghan problem can best be achieved by the Afghan people.

In many of our countries, the will of the people is the foundation on which our societies are built. The will of my people in Saint Kitts and Nevis was freely and fairly exercised, without fear, on 21 March this year. I can do no other, therefore, than to speak out in defence of the will of peoples everywhere.

I wish to commend very highly the Secretary-General's initiative in relation to Western Sahara, resulting in the establishment of a technical commission to advance the peace process in that area. My delegation welcomes the convening of the July meeting in New York to investigate the possibility of accelerating and facilitating implementation of the United Nations and Organization of African Unity settlement proposals, and the participation in the discussions of representatives of Morocco and the POLISARIO. I urge continued dialogue between the POLISARIO and the Kingdom of Morocco and a continued search for areas of agreement in the interest of the peace and stability of Western Sahara. There too the voice of the people should be heard.

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Our efforts to assist the people of Kampuchea to obtain peace and justice must continue unabated. Following the call of the General Assembly at its forty-third session for the creation of an interim administration in Cambodia, an international conference was held in Paris in July and August 1989, at which the nations of South-East Asia participated with others to develop a comprehensive peace plan to end two decades of fighting in Cambodia. We commend the Secretary-General for convening the conference. We must appeal to all parties to work within the United Nations framework to ensure that there is no return to the atrocities of the past.

I also request the Secretary-General to use his good offices to initiate a full investigation of the violence and abuses of power that occurred on the mainland of China in June of this year.

In the Middle East too the conflict continues unabated. There too the United Nations must seek to foster peace through dialogue. In spite of all the complexities of the conflict, one of the basic parameters for peace is that the right of the Palestinian people to a well-defined homeland must coexist with the right of the people of Israel to live within secure borders. A first step to peace would be for all parties to adhere to the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the issue. My delegation also supports the proposal for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

In our region, encompassing Central America and the Caribbean, we have had both progressive and disquieting developments. In the Caribbean we have seen Governments either returned to office or changed at the will of the people in free and fair elections. My delegation commends the Governments of Central America for the sustained and determined efforts they have made to restore peace and stability to the region. We recognize that the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) have contributed to the improvement in the level of harmony

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which is becoming more evident in the region. We applaud the collective constructive role those organizations are playing in the movement towards new elections in Nicaragua in 1990.

It is a source of great satisfaction to us that the Cartagena Protocol has been ratified, as it facilitates the membership in the OAS of Guyana and Belize, our partners in the Caribbean Community and Common Market, and undoubtedly has a positive impact on the encouragement of friendly relations between Belize and Guatemala. I must stress, however, that my country's support for the sovereignty of Belize remains undiminished.

Among the areas of disquiet already referred to in the region is Panama. In that country the will of the people was thwarted and frustrated by the untimely intervention of the military in the election process. This has led to an instability which can ultimately affect others in the region. My delegation condemns the blatant denial of the people's rights and calls for a speedy return to democracy there.

The people of Haiti too have suffered a similar fate. We call on the régime in Haiti to take all necessary steps to ensure that the people can freely elect a Government of their choice, so the Government so chosen can have a mandate and the authority to address the serious economic and social ills of that country through its own efforts and also by the mobilization of international assistance.

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We cannot speak out in defence of the freedom and the human rights of people everywhere, then remain silent when people's rights are trampled and their freedom denied in South Africa. What is being called progress is nothing but a smoke-screen, a thin veneer which can be wiped away to reveal apartheid, still present in all its ugliness and inhumanity. There can be no moderate apartheid, no acceptable apartheid. We must not let our guard down; we must not be lulled into a false sense of complacency while the black majority are denied the right to vote, and denied the free exercise of a status equal to that of the white minority. No, the only solution is an end to apartheid and an acceptance that all men are created equal and that all are entitled to breathe the fresh air of freedom. Until that time we must be resolute in the application of sanctions against South Africa. That régime must never be in doubt about the intensity of our abhorrence of the evil system of apartheid.

In that context, I must warn that, according to our information, in spite of resolutions adopted at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, major obstacles to free and fair elections in Namibia still persist. There is still an atmosphere of fear and intimidation created by members of the South African Koevoet. There is still fear that secrecy will not be assured, and that some South African officials will be able to manipulate the elections. My delegation strongly supports Security Council resolution 640 (1989), adopted unanimously on Tuesday, 29 August 1989, calling for all parties, especially South Africa, to comply strictly with resolution 435 (1978), which details election procedures and provides for the disbanding of all paramilitary and ethnic forces and commando units. I call for an end to South African subversion of the Namibian independence process, and I must emphasize that it is the collective responsibility of the Governments Members of the United Nations jointly to facilitate the establishment in Namibia of a stable government and economy.

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Sometimes our progress to Utopia appears slow, but we must not become weary. It is clear that, in spite of a multiplicity of problems, this Organization, the United Nations, has contributed and continues to contribute to the resolution of conflicts and the ushering in of conciliation and peace throughout the world. In recognition of this, I call for continuation of dialogue between South Korea and North Korea to achieve their mutual objectives. At the same time, I believe it would be timely and advantageous to welcome both of those countries which occupy the Korean peninsula into membership of the United Nations.

I shall now turn my attention to the issue of drug abuse. This is one of the most devastating threats facing the world today, a growing menace that transcends frontiers and cuts across political, economic and social boundaries, that cannot be controlled by any one country single-handedly.

At the recent meeting of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, agreement was reached as to the need for the creation of appropriate international mechanisms to assist in combating drug trafficking - namely, the Jamaican proposal for a multilateral force established under the United Nations to provide assistance in intelligence and interdiction; and the Trinidad and Tobago proposal for the establishment of commissions of inquiry and an international criminal court to investigate and adjudicate on the criminal responsibility of persons engaged in offences such as drug trafficking. We must continue to bear in mind, however, that, while recognizing the international implications of anti-drug operations, we must steadfastly respect the sovereignty of all States.

There are countries to which the issue of disarmament is more immediately relevant. I wish to emphasize, however, that progress in the area of disarmament creates the opportunity for substantial resources to be diverted to more humanitarian pursuits, including the protection of the environment. Whereas the

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protection and preservation of a healthy environment is important to all countries, it is crucial to the economic growth of developing island countries. We must depend upon the sea around us to provide abundant marine life to sustain us and our beaches and pure air to attract visitors from the crowded metropolis. The protection of the environment is the protection of life itself.

I come from a beautiful, peaceful country with no enemies, but subject to the vagaries of nature which can, in the twinkling of an eye, destroy our entire infrastructure and set us back decades. I am sure that I speak for all the people of my country, St. Kitts and Nevis, when I say that it is good to be a Member of this world body, which will listen to the voices of all its Members, which will help in times of need, and which will continue to be the guiding light in times of tragedy, whether created by man or by a greater force.

Mr. EL TALHY (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, permit me at the outset to convey to you the sincere congratulations of my country's delegation on your election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It is an honour to our African continent that you have been chosen for this esteemed position. I am also pleased, because you belong to a friendly State which maintains strong historic and cultural relations with mine. I have every confidence that your qualities and rich experience will help us to achieve the desired results of this session.

It also gives me pleasure to express the appreciation and gratitude of the Libyan Arab delegation to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his competent and commendable handling of the work of the previous session.

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I should also like to express our great appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his sincere efforts to advance the ideals of the United Nations and for the initiatives he has taken to improve the performance of the Organization and peacefully resolve the complex problems facing the international community.

Despite problems and political pressures, the United Nations has proved that it really deserves our confidence, and that it can accomplish much of what we aspire to as an international group, if we have the will to create the appropriate climate for the Organization.

The United Nations is the embodiment of our common will to close our ranks in working for the realization of the deeply cherished aspirations of mankind: namely, peace, freedom, justice and prosperity. A cursory look at the world today, which is beset with problems and issues that accumulate year after year, shows clearly that we are regrettably far from making any real progress towards the noble purposes for whose achievement the United Nations was established.

The reasons for the continuing erosion of the Organization's potential are well known. Thus the declaration issued by the Ninth Summit Conference of Heads of States or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has expressed our concern about the realities of the Organization and voiced our hopes for its future when it states that:

"Despite all challenges, the United Nations system has stood the test of time. Even those who are still ignoring the United Nations as a forum for collective action of States have increasingly realized that this Organization is an indispensable means to regulate international disputes and to endeavour to solve international problems ...".

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In another section, the declaration continues:

"To this end, we shall endeavour to strengthen the machinery of the United Nations and to revitalize, expand and co-ordinate its activities ...".

The Charter, which should guide our work, is constantly being flouted: areas of tension are spreading; dangers are becoming more acute. This stems from the insistence of certain Powers to give the policies of force, intimidation and terrorism the upper hand over the spirit of co-operation, understanding and constructive dialogue.

There are many persistent violations of the Charter, the most serious of which glares at one at the entrance to this building, where the flags of the most repulsive régimes known in modern history are hoisted, namely, the apartheid régime in South Africa and the racist Zionist entity in occupied Palestine. These two régimes are closely related; they represent a challenge to moral principles and right. I believe that as an international group we should not tolerate a falsehood that we can change if we so desire.

Major developments have taken place in the international arena since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. The current international situation is different from that of 1945. Thus we appeal for serious collective action to strengthen the role of the Organization. This we believe, will require the review of those provisions of the Charter which are inconsistent with existing international circumstances.

We urge the Special Committee on the Charter and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization to move from the time-consuming phase of consideration and discussion to the phase of proposing practical solutions and of submitting specific proposals on the provisions that cripple the Organization's effectiveness.

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Worthy of note among these provisions is the veto privilege, which has become an insurmountable obstacle to international unanimity. That privilege has been abused by some of the States that enjoy it. They use it not to defend what is right and to preserve international peace and security, but to consecrate falsehood and promote aggression, occupation, invasion and terrorism. My country, which is honoured to have taken the initiative in calling for a review of the veto privilege, reaffirms its resolute stand on this issue.

We have great faith in the United Nations and in its ever-more essential role. We believe that the strong and united will of peace-loving nations can help the Organization achieve the desired effectiveness. It alone can deter those who espouse policies of threats and force.

My country has suffered from detestable imperialist practices, past and present. At the beginning of this century it was subjected to hateful fascist invasion, occupation and colonialism, during which it suffered from all forms of oppression, destruction and attempts at genocide.

During the Second World War, the Libyan territory became a major battlefield and our people paid an exorbitant material and human price. Although the war ended for its principal parties, its vestiges - the mines and other war matériel left behind by the warring forces with no consideration for the inhabitants of the country - continue to plague us. Libyans still suffer material and human losses as a result of them. Years ago, we took the initiative and raised the problem in the General Assembly, which adopted numerous resolutions calling upon the States responsible for deploying and leaving those deadly weapons to provide all necessary information, help in their removal and compensate for the human and material damage caused by them. Today, through this forum, we renew our appeal to the

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international community to urge the States concerned to act in a responsible manner and implement the provisions of the Assembly's resolutions.

My country is just an example: the phenomenon is much wider in scope. The States which invaded and colonized our countries, exploited our economic and human resources and fought over our territories in the past should shoulder the historic responsibility of atoning for their acts. Thus we urge consideration of the question of compensation for invasion and colonial exploitation. The States concerned must take moral responsibility as the point of departure in considering this issue. Compensation for colonialism is the least we can expect of imperialist States. We must realize that the problems facing many States in the developing world today were caused by the suffering of their peoples during the periods of invasion and colonialism.

As the Ninth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries declared in its special paper on decolonization,

"The Heads of State or Government called upon all former and present imperialist Powers to shoulder their responsibilities and pay all due compensation for the economic, social and cultural consequences of colonizing developing countries."

Perhaps the most repulsive act to which my country has been exposed was the direct military aggression launched in the spring of 1986 against our peaceful cities by a super-Power which is also a permanent member of the Security Council; let alone the repeated provocative and hostile actions perpetrated against us by that State since the early 1980s. It has also imposed economic, scientific and cultural boycott measures against us, which is entirely unjustifiable.

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The international community has rejected and condemned those practices. This was reflected in General Assembly resolution 41/38, which affirmed that the aggressive State pay compensation for material and human losses incurred as a result of treacherous acts of aggression. Today, we once again strongly call upon the international community to urge the aggressive State to shoulder its responsibilities and comply with this resolution and implement its provisions without delay.

My country, as one of the States bordering the Mediterranean basin, attaches great importance to the question of strengthening security and co-operation in that region. We have constantly called for making the Mediterranean basin "a zone of peace", for we are fully aware that peace and security in the region is closely related to international peace and security. The Mediterranean has become one of the most dangerous areas of tension in the world because of Zionist practices in and around occupied Palestine and because of the insistence of certain imperialist Powers on transforming the Mediterranean into a base for foreign military fleets and an arena for manoeuvres, provocation, including acts of air and naval piracy, as well as a launching pad for acts of direct aggression against certain States.

My country is committed to working to support regional and international efforts to bring about effective security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. As we applaud the persistent efforts made by the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement in the region, we renew our call for other littoral States of the Mediterranean to discharge their responsibilities and enter into a meaningful and balanced dialogue to establish strong and lasting bases for co-operation. We believe that achieving these objectives begins with a common conviction of the need to take collective measures, among which priority should be given to ending racist

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Zionist practices in occupied Palestine and demanding the immediate withdrawal of military fleets from, and the dismantling of foreign bases in, the region.

The issues of human rights command great attention in our country. This arises from an unfaltering belief that respect for human dignity is the basis for peoples' progress and prosperity. This respect derives from a culture and a religion whose central theme is respect for man and humanity. Allah stated in the Holy Koran:

"We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation." (The Holy Koran, XVII:70)

Human dignity is realized by observing principles, first and foremost among which is equality as a common human value. Islam decrees that all people are equal "as the teeth of a comb" - that no distinction should be made except that based on competence, work and what each person offers to his God, to himself, his country and humanity. Thus Islam abolished the caste and class systems - discrimination based on differences related to ancestral claims, kinship and colour. In this context Allah said:

"Oh mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (The Holy Koran, XLIX:13)

The Prophet - peace be upon him - said in his farewell pilgrimage sermon in which he drafted a constitution for mankind:

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"Oh ye people, verily your God is One, and your father is one. All mankind is the progeny of Adam who was fashioned out of clay. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most God-fearing. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for the white over the black, nor for the black over the white except in piety."

The words of the just Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab will echo throughout time, for having admonished one of the administrators under his caliphate: "Since when have you reduced people, who were born free, into servitude!"

In March 1988, Libya took major practical and legal steps to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels. The year 1989 witnessed developments that reinforced our accomplishments. Early this year, the Freedom Consolidation Act was adopted and accession to a large number of international conventions in the field of human rights was ratified. Moreover, the International People's Committee on the Qadaffi Prize for Human Rights was established. This summer my country hosted the first meeting of that committee, during which the Qadaffi Prize for Human Rights was awarded to the African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela.

We are determined to continue supporting efforts of the international community through the United Nations and its bodies concerned with human rights to attain the lofty aims cherished by humanity. In this respect, we stress that the racist practices in occupied Palestine and South Africa represent an outrageous defiance of the will of the international community and an intolerable contempt for human rights.

The Palestine question is at the top of the list of issues that concern the international community, even though certain quarters wish otherwise. This priority is given not only because the Palestine question involves real threats to

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international peace and security, but also because it is a defiance of ethical values and an attack on rights, in contempt for all values. This question is still the main concern of my country. We believe that night, however long it may be, is followed by day; injustice, however prolonged it may be, must come to an end. The people's struggle derives from the will of Allah and this must be victorious.

The intifadah of the Palestinian people against Zionist occupation, which has been going on for nearly two years, has reminded the world once again of this people's tragedy. The barbaric practices of Zionists against unarmed children and women - unarmed except, perhaps, with stones - reveal the true nature of Zionism and prove that the aim of Zionist terrorists and those who back them is the eradication of the Palestinian people as a first step to attaining objectives that target the very existence of a nation.

The uprising - the intifadah - has also proven that it is impossible to suppress a people's will to attain its lawful aspirations and that any separate, or even international, attempts to make peace deals that run counter to that people's will cannot achieve success.

Our stand on this question emanates from our compliance with international instruments, morality and the dictates of national duty. Our stand is a firm and clear one: We fully support the struggle of the Palestinian people to liberate its territory, enjoy its right to self-determination and establish an independent state on the whole Palestinian territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

It is incumbent on the international community to shoulder its historic responsibility of restoring rights to those lawfully entitled to them. The United Nations, which has conferred legality on the occupying Zionist entity at the expense of rights, justice and morality, thus committing an unparalleled historic blunder, is called upon to remedy this situation.

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The tragic situation in Lebanon is another by-product of the illegal existence of the Zionist entity in our Arab region. My country, which has constantly called for preserving the unity and territorial sovereignty of Lebanon, believes that resolving the Lebanese problem involves primarily the immediate and complete withdrawal of the Zionist occupation forces from every inch of Lebanese soil and putting an end to the interference of that entity and other foreign Powers in Lebanese affairs, thus enabling all brotherly Lebanese groups to hold a dialogue in the spirit of fraternity and tolerance.

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We maintain that the efforts made within the framework of the Arab League - namely the Tripartite Commission - can help our Lebanese brothers overcome their plight. We call upon all peace-loving forces to support these efforts.

My country is following with great interest the developments which have taken place since the cease-fire in the Gulf War. It renews its sincere call for the two Muslim States, Iraq and Iran, to respond in a fraternal and Islamic manner to the efforts made by the international community to implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The Namibian question, which has long been, at the forefront of the political problems facing the international community, has reached a crucial state, that of the cautious anticipation of the intensive international efforts being made to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The Namibian people who have made enormous sacrifices in their struggle are in need of support from the international community today when there are many manoeuvres aimed at creating a situation in Namibia that would enable the apartheid régime to direct at will the results of the elections. My country, which has always provided various forms of political and material support to the Namibian people throughout the period of their heroic and honourable struggle, reiterates its commitment to support the struggle till the Namibian people achieve all their lawful aspirations.

While dealing with the current situation in Namibia, we should convey our profound appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his assistants, especially those working in the field, for their efforts to help the Namibian people achieve true independence.

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At the previous session, we expressed the hope that the anticipated independence of Namibia would represent a real step towards the elimination of the apartheid régime in South Africa. Today, as we are about to achieve the cherished aim of Namibian independence, we entertain new hopes that this victory will give new and powerful impetus to the struggle of the liberation movement in all its forms, to eradicate the apartheid régime. Because of its firm belief in the cause of freedom and its support for the oppressed, Libya reaffirms its complete willingness to continue its effective contribution with a view to bringing about a comprehensive escalation of the struggle against racists and to attaining victory for the oppressed African people in South Africa.

We should not fail to pay a tribute to the peoples of the African front-line States for their enormous sacrifices.

In our region, the question of Cyprus has not been resolved. My country wishes to reiterate that a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of this question should be based on the unity, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Cyprus, ridding it of foreign bases as well as guaranteeing the rights of both the Greek and the Turkish communities.

As for Afghanistan, my country reiterates its support for all international efforts aiming at preserving the unity of the Afghan people, their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. It sincerely urges all our brothers in Afghanistan to resolve their differences in a manner guided by wisdom, fraternity and understanding.

My country supports the lawful aspirations of the Korean people to reunify the two parts of their country by peaceful means, without any foreign interference. My country also calls for the dismantling of foreign bases and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea.

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Nuclear and chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction represent the main danger that threatens mankind with annihilation. What adds to the complexity of this issue is the insistence of certain nuclear Powers on engaging in a race to develop and modernize their arsenals at a time when humanity is aware of a certain degree of détente. As regards cessation of the nuclear-arms race, humanity has great expectations.

As a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons and the Geneva Protocol, my country supports all regional and international endeavours to curb the nuclear-arms race and eradicate nuclear weapons. It also supports all international measures and efforts to prohibit all types of weapons of mass destruction.

We lend support to the principle of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in any part of the world, including Africa and the Middle East. We believe, however, that this goal will remain out of reach because favourable circumstances have not been created, as there are racist régimes in both South Africa and Palestine. These régimes have co-operated closely and constantly in the field of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Recently, the Zionist entity was experimenting with long-range missiles in the the Mediterranean when one of the missiles landed near the Libyan city of Benghazi. There is no doubt that the acquisition of these weapons of mass destruction by the Zionist entity threatens the entire region. The history of the Zionist entity, its practices and, above all, the fact that it has attacked Tunisia twice and Iraq once confirm the fact that the security of the entire region is threatened.

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Jamahiriya)

The United Nations has a special responsibility, for it should not merely draw the attention of the international family to the dangers inherent in the acquisition of these weapons of mass destruction by Israelis, but it should also take the necessary actions to eliminate this threat.

There is no doubt that international terrorism is a phenomenon which is a source of grave and growing concern for the international community because it results in the loss of innocent lives and threatens people's peace and security. It also wreaks havoc and undermines confidence on the level of international relations. We share the conviction of the international community concerning the need to combat all forms of international terrorism. As we take up this phenomenon once more at this session, we notice with regret that international endeavours have fallen short of addressing this particular problem. This is due mainly to the fact that there are forms of international terrorism we have neither touched upon nor duly examined. One of these forms of terrorism whose danger has increased is State terrorism. This has prompted my country strongly to support the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of an international conference to define the concept of terrorism, and to support the need to develop specific international criteria to ensure that a clear distinction is made between terrorism that should be fought and eradicated on the one hand and the lawful struggle of peoples on the other. We sincerely hope that the legal committee, the Sixth Committee, will be able, during the current session, to take action to enable us to launch an objective and meaningful international dialogue on this issue.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab  
Jamahiriya)

My country shares the deep and growing concern of the international community at the grave imbalance in present international economic relations, resulting mainly from the unjust bases on which the international economic order was built. This order took shape under international circumstances which were entirely different from today's realities. Third-world countries, which today represent the majority of the international community, are suffering from the negative and serious consequences of this imbalance.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab  
Jamahiriya)

Numerous manifestations of this suffering can be found in a multitude of problems, of which I shall give a few illustrations: the sharp decline in the prices of commodities, the doubling of the external debt burden of developing countries, the depletion of their financial resources and the prevalence of poverty, famine, disease and excessive protectionism in international trade, as well as the imposition of unfair terms of trade. In addition, economic coercion policies are being adopted by certain developed countries by way of economic embargoes and blockades.

This unjust economic order has become an insurmountable obstacle facing developing countries. Hence, the call for the establishment of a new international economic order. This just demand will remain out of reach owing to the obduracy and stubbornness of certain developed countries, whose inflexibility has aggravated and complicated the problems of developing countries especially in the 1980s, which can be termed the lost decade of development.

We believe that the developing countries should not be over-optimistic about the results of the so-called North-South dialogue, because the developed countries have shown that they only care for their selfish interests regardless of the urgent needs of the developing countries.

Changing the unfair economic order of today's world begins with solidarity and cohesion among those who suffer from injustice and with the promotion of co-operation among them. That is the positive way of attempting to persuade others. I do not deny that this course requires further sacrifices from us that may at first add to our problems, but it remains the only promising approach. To continue to resign ourselves to the existing relationships would mean that we had given up hope.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab  
Jamahiriya)

Talking about the world economy leads me to another, closely related issue: the question of global environment, which is also of major concern to us all. The world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis, about which nature is sending us urgent warnings that can be ignored only at our own peril. Numerous and growing indicators of this crisis are all around us. In addition to serious air pollution, there is desertification, soil erosion, depletion of forests, the greenhouse effect, unusual climatic changes and deterioration of the ozone layer. There is also the problem of nuclear and industrial toxic wastes, which has given rise to justifiable concern, especially in the third world, where scheming outsiders would dump such materials.

We have a collective responsibility to protect the environment. This surely calls for huge collective efforts; sporadic efforts will not be sufficient to achieve our goals in this field.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, history dictates that we develop our potential and eliminate all the erroneous practices peculiar to the twentieth century. Policies of confrontation, threats and brandishing of power should be abandoned in favour of policies of rapprochement, dialogue, understanding and co-operation to establish the safe and prosperous international community of which our children dream.

May God enable us all to achieve that goal.

Mr. KASIM (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, it is my pleasure to congratulate you warmly on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. This constitutes recognition both of your personal qualities and of the high esteem in which your friendly country, Nigeria, is held. I am confident that your eminent skill and wisdom will help us to achieve the best of results.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

I am also delighted to express our gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his outstanding ability and activities in presiding over the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

Our gratitude and appreciation also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his persistent endeavours and intensive efforts to promote the role of our Organization and achieve its noble objectives. I have studied the valuable annual report on the work of the Organization he has submitted for the past year, and I hope to continue working and co-operating to translate into reality the worthy principles and ideas it contains.

The period since the Second World War has seen the birth of a new international order revolving around the United Nations and its Charter, which establishes the framework for co-operation and mutual understanding among its Members and calls for coexistence and constructive interaction among peoples. The practice of multilateral diplomacy is now inevitable, and it is essential that we adopt a collective approach in dealing with the problems before us.

While the cold war - which we can now see is dissipating - resulted in tension and anxiety in the world, the new *détente* in international relations, whose effects are beginning to be felt in various spheres, particularly in disarmament and the settlement of a number of regional conflicts, has given the peoples of the world a renewed sense of relief, optimism and assurance.

In addition, the United Nations - which had hitherto not been given a full opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness - is now seeing its role revived and its confidence restored. This is the result not only of the improved international atmosphere but also of the recent success in the settlement of various regional conflicts. The Organization remains the principal forum and the most appropriate

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

framework for attaining the mutual understanding and harmony required to confront and solve the problems of the world by means of co-operation, co-ordination and constructive dialogue among all its Members.

The appearance of common challenges which transcend national boundaries has led to an increase in interest in the United Nations and the need to make use of its machinery has been confirmed. For example, environmental pollution, the world-wide shortage of food, the narcotics trade and international economic instability are all problems no single State is capable of solving on its own. Common international efforts are needed in this respect. Hence interdependence has become one of the most outstanding features of contemporary international relations.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

Faith in the role and significance of the United Nations is precisely what makes us place so much hope in the Organization and have recourse to it, both to solve conflicts and to co-ordinate our efforts to deal with the various challenges transcending regional boundaries.

Our agenda includes a large number of conflicts and challenges which, we hope, we shall be able to address, but the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which is the question of Palestine, remains the most serious and the one most urgently requiring solution.

The world is now aware that the question of Palestine is indeed at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people are pivotal to that question. Jordan has lived with the question of Palestine since its inception, has been affected by it and has undertaken much in the process. Jordan's objective in its endeavours to address the question has been, and continues to be, to achieve a just peace settlement guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and security and stability in the Middle East and enhancing international peace and security.

Jordan has always maintained that a political settlement of the Palestinian question is the only option of the parties. Accordingly, through co-ordination with Arab States, consultation with the major Powers and co-operation with the United Nations, it has striven to attain a comprehensive and just agreement rooted in international legitimacy. It has therefore responded to the peace initiatives proposed in connection with the question and accepted the pertinent international resolutions. It took part in the efforts to ensure the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which states that land may not be acquired by means of war, insists on the need for Israel to withdraw from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, and affirms the right of all States in the region to live in peace within internationally recognized borders. Jordan also accepted Security

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Council resolution 338 (1973), which served to complement resolution 242 (1967), particularly by calling on the parties to negotiate within an international framework.

Jordan also responded to the development in the Arab community in 1974 endorsing the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. A move in this direction had already been made with its announcement of the United Arab Kingdom project in 1972, as a preliminary conception under which to assert the identity of the Palestinian people, to forge its national entity and to define the future relationship between Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, based on the principle of union and assertion of the independent Palestinian identity. Jordan also accepted the 1982 Arab peace plan for a balanced peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As a result of the intensive efforts undertaken by His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan, the Arab States reached a unanimous agreement at the Amman summit conference in 1987 to the effect that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the already agreed modalities, constituted the appropriate means to achieve a comprehensive and just peaceful settlement of the conflict such as to guarantee the restoration of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights, including the right to establish its own independent State on its national soil, to solve all aspects of the Palestinian question and to ensure the right of all States in the region to live in peace within internationally recognized borders.

There have been highly significant positive developments in the Palestinian question over the past two years, to the extent that a historic opportunity now exists for the attainment of a comprehensive political settlement. By its

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persistence and momentum, the intifadah has been successful in moving Palestinian political action into a position of initiative and taking action. Jordan's decision to sever its legal and administrative links with the occupied West Bank on 31 July 1988, in response to the request of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the wishes of fraternal Arab States, came as a positive contribution in this direction and made all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict directly aware of their responsibilities.

The Palestinian leadership began its positive action by calling for a meeting of the Palestine National Council at Algiers at the end of last year. That meeting produced a series of positive resolutions which were characterized by realism and moderation and removed the obstacles to a peace settlement and the pretexts on which Israel had taken refuge since the June 1967 aggression. The positive Palestinian position met with broad international acclaim and led to the initiation of a Palestinian-United States dialogue, which we hope will develop and continue in order that the peace process may be brought to its desired conclusion.

Accordingly, we continue to believe that the right way to bring about peace is to convene the International Conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and with the presence of the five permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and of all other United Nations resolutions relating to the rights of the Palestinian people and to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We believe that the United Nations, and its Charter and resolutions, provide the natural and appropriate framework in which to bring about a settlement, and that the five permanent members of the Council must exert their influence to achieve this objective, for they bear a special responsibility under the Charter.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

What is required of them, now that the Arab position has been rounded out by acceptance of the International Peace Conference, is that they should endeavour to persuade Israel to comply with the will of the international community by breaking out of the circle of violence and oppression and opting for a state of security, stability and constructiveness. For Israel cannot hope to win both land and peace. If Israel persists in its present policy, it will only cause more suffering and instability. Meanwhile, its attempts to outflank and circumvent the achievements of the Palestinian people by clinging to incomplete proposals such as the Shamir election plan will not be of benefit to anyone.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

We therefore consider it absolutely essential that every nation - particularly those that are capable of exercising influence - exert a genuine effort to make Israel comply with international law, respect the will of the international community, and accept a just and comprehensive peace settlement through a dialogue between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in preparation for the direct negotiations that will take place at the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In this connection, we see the efforts of the President of Egypt, His Excellency Mohamed Hosni Mubarak - particularly the 10 points that he has proposed in order to break the deadlock in the peace process - as an opportunity that should not be missed by Israel. Israel's response to these efforts will be a real test of its desire for peace.

As I said at the beginning of my statement, the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the only problem afflicting the Middle East. Much as we welcome the positive developments in the Iraq-Iran conflict since last year's cease-fire, and the inclination to bring about peace through direct negotiations as a fundamental means to which the two parties are committed for the settlement of all aspects of the conflict, we express today our profound concern and unease at the present deadlock and at the deliberate decision of Iran to delay the progress of negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the purpose of implementing Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the agreement of 8 August 1988. This attitude has been adopted by Iran despite Iraq's flexible and responsible attitude since the outbreak of the conflict and its sincere desire to reach an agreement that would preserve the rights of both parties, guarantee good-neighbourliness between them, and establish security and stability for all States in the region.

In the light of this situation, steps must be taken towards resumption of direct negotiations between the two parties, in order that they may move forward

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from the current cease-fire to a state of lasting and comprehensive peace, by implementing Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as an integrated peace plan, leading eventually to a peace agreement by which the two sides will undertake to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and not to intervene in each other's internal affairs.

If Iraq and the other Arab countries look historically upon Iran as a friendly neighbour, it is up to the Iranian side to demonstrate the same spirit and to show the same attachment to peace. The fact that Iraq has demobilized recently five military divisions of its armed forces is a true indication of this trend, and we hope that Iran will act in the same way. Urgent action must also be taken to end the suffering of prisoners of war, who, under international conventions, should not be used as a means of exerting political pressure. Attention must be given to the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 also.

The Lebanese tragedy has assumed dimensions that make it impossible to keep silent. The ordeals, killing and destruction that the Lebanese have undergone have exceeded all bounds. Foreign threats and intervention in Lebanon have also reached a dangerous level. In view of its concern for Lebanon and for that country's independence and unity, Jordan has taken part in every Arab effort, and has also supported international efforts, to end the Lebanese tragedy. The last such effort consisted of the formation of the Tripartite Committee of Arab Heads of State, in which the Arab States placed their trust, and at which they expressed their wishes for the identification of an Arab solution to the tragedy. We endorse the steps that the Committee has taken and the progress that it has made up to now. It is for the various parties to take advantage of the meeting of Lebanese deputies in the city of Taif, Saudi Arabia, the prevailing good will, and current positive conditions.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

It is also vital that the United Nations - particularly the five permanent members of the Security Council - persist in their efforts to help save Lebanon, by prevailing upon Israel to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and ensuring its withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Such an approach is essential, as support will thus be provided for the related Arab effort, and added weight given to endeavours to restore Lebanon's independence and control over all its territory.

The fact that the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia came into effect on 1 April 1989 is a source of satisfaction to us all. It represents a victory both for the struggling people of Namibia and for the South West Africa People's Organization and testifies to the effectiveness of the United Nations. We hope that the remaining stages of the plan - particularly the elections to be held next month - will be implemented in peace and without delay, in order that the people of Namibia may be enabled to exercise self-determination, establish their own State and decide their own future. We look forward to Namibia's joining us shortly as an independent, sovereign State.

At the same time, we urge that international efforts be combined to induce South Africa to abolish the system of apartheid prevailing in that country - representing, as it does, a stigma of shame, which has to be eliminated.

We welcomed the peace agreement that was successfully concluded last year between the parties involved in the Afghan problem. In welcoming the completion of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, we hope that all the parties will be able to agree and to show mutual understanding in order that the problem may finally be settled by means of national reconciliation that preserves Afghanistan's independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status and ensures that Afghan refugees can return to their homes.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

We support the independence, unity, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus and welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to solve the question of Cyprus in such a way as to fulfil the hopes of both communities of the Cypriot people for a solution of their problems and to establish a suitable formula for peaceful coexistence in accordance with the shared wishes of that people. We urge both parties to maintain constructive dialogue and to take advantage of the Secretary-General's worthy efforts in this connection.

With regard to the Kampuchean problem, we support action to bring about a comprehensive political settlement, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the right of peoples to self-determination without outside intervention. We do so in view of the positive effects that such a settlement will have in the South-East Asian region as a whole. We appreciate the intensive efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to that end. We also welcome the fact that Viet Nam has completed the withdrawal of its forces from Kampuchea, and hope that this constitutes the start of a new phase to be characterized by peace, constructiveness and co-operation in Kampuchea and in the region as a whole.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

We also support the admission of the two Koreas to the United Nations, as that would enhance the chances of national unity for the Korean people, promote peace and stability in the region, and uphold the principle of universality on which this international Organization was founded.

We hope that the nations of Central America will be able to solve their political and security problems and devote the efforts to promoting the welfare and prosperity of their peoples. In this they should be guided by the Esquipulas II accords and the subsequent agreements and declarations, the latest of which was concluded at Tela, Honduras, this past August.

One of the highest priorities of our world today is the process of nuclear and conventional disarmament. This requires good faith and genuine endeavours. Although action in that direction is the joint responsibility of all, the States with massive arsenals of such weapons bear special responsibility. In this connection, we were especially encouraged by the INF Treaty concluded by the two super-Powers in December 1987, on the elimination of their intermediate-range nuclear missiles. We were similarly heartened by the latest proposals formulated by the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction or destruction of their stocks of chemical, strategic and conventional weapons, as well as on the halting of nuclear testing. The improvement in the international climate resulting from better relations between the two super-Powers has generated relief and given rise to a sense of optimism in the world. We hope that efforts will be accelerated so that the disarmament process, in all its aspects, may continue to make serious progress towards general and comprehensive disarmament in the world.

In this context, we cannot but voice once again our concern over Israel's nuclear arms build-up, which has heightened tension in our region and ushered in a phase of grave danger. Israel is the only State in the Middle East that refuses to submit its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards

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system and to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Israel's arsenal of strategic weapons is growing. The latest addition is its recently developed missile which was tested a few days ago in the Mediterranean.

In order for the improvement in East-West relations to become a basic step towards the creation of an appropriate international climate, it must be accompanied by an improvement in international economic relations and movement towards the creation of a more balanced and equitable economic order.

The economic gap between the developed and the developing countries, and the problems of indebtedness and poverty are but the outcome of the imbalances inherent in the present international economic order. The developing countries cannot succeed in their efforts to raise their peoples' standard of living unless collective solutions are found for these problems.

In this connection, we welcome the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly scheduled for next April on international economic co-operation and, in particular, the revitalization of economic growth and development in developing countries.

As we prepare for the formulation of an international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, we hope that concerted efforts will be made towards the formulation of solutions to these problems in a manner that will ensure positive benefits for all - not just for some.

We believe in the importance of revitalizing the North-South dialogue in pursuit of positive results in the areas of economics, development and the environment. In this connection, we endorse the Quadripartite initiative announced by the leaders of Egypt, India, Senegal and Venezuela in Paris last July concerning

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the need for regular consultations between leaders of the North and the South on such problems.

Believing as we do in Jordan that the strengthening of relations between States - particularly in the economic sphere - creates a better climate of harmony and co-operation that reflects favourably on other areas, and taking into account contemporary world trends towards the creation of economic groupings that provide the members of such groups with better opportunities to protect their interests and achieve economic development and progress, we - together with our brethren in the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Iraq and the Yemen Arab Republic - set up the Arab Co-operation Council last February. We are confident that this economic grouping - whose purposes and principles are consistent with those of the United Nations Charter - will help, together with the Gulf Co-operation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union, to promote joint Arab economic action, and thereby make a positive contribution towards the promotion of international economic co-operation.

Jordan firmly believes in the inevitability of reaching solutions to the problems of today's world if the necessary political will is shown. Our world is large enough to embrace different beliefs and persuasions, but it is too small to accommodate all the conflicts and lethal weapons made by man. Mankind has reached a stage of evolution, civilization and maturity that makes progress the only option open to us. So let us work together for a fairer, more harmonious and more open human community that will furnish the basis for a more secure, stable and prosperous world. This can be achieved only through a sincere desire for peace and through faith in the shared interests and common destiny of mankind. We should continue our common efforts in an atmosphere of constructive co-operation and positive dialogue within the framework of the United Nations.

(Mr. Kasim, Jordan)

Let us remain ever mindful of the lofty principles and noble goals of our international Organization, and fill our hearts with optimism in the auspicious atmosphere that reigns in this session.

Mr. TRAORE (Guinea) (interpretation from French): It is a pleasure for me once again to extend to the Assembly the warm and friendly greetings of the Republic of Guinea and of its President, General Lansana Conte.

Your election, Sir, to preside over the current session augurs well for success in our work, thanks to your great diplomatic experience and your outstanding personal qualities, which fit you very well for your high office. You are the representative of a continent constantly struggling for the advent of a new world order. Your country, Nigeria, is noted for its dynamic commitment to peace and progress. Moreover, we hardly need recall that Africa's economic charter, approved in April 1980, bears the title of "the Lagos Plan of Action". I assure you of my delegation's full co-operation as you discharge your mandate.

I also wish to pay a well deserved tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, who presided ably and competently over the forty-third session.

My delegation would also pay a tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his courageous and tireless work for peace and for understanding between peoples.

While welcoming the positive changes in international relations in recent years, we have to note that some political crises persist in the world. We are concerned about the situation in southern Africa, Palestine, the occupied Arab territories, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Cambodia.

In southern Africa, in just under two months the future of Namibia will be decided, when elections are held in the Territory. In that connection, my country condemns Pretoria's delaying tactics to hinder the proper implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Because of those tactics, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility for the full implementation of that resolution.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

Effective action must begin with the demobilization of the troops integrated into the South African police - in particular, the notorious Koevoet, set up to be veritable commandos of death and terror in Namibia.

I repeat my country's unconditional support for the South West Africa People's Organization. We hope that the courageous people of Namibia will soon see the dawn of an era of regained freedom and true independence.

In South Africa itself, the racist Pretoria régime's 12-month extension of the state of emergency is further proof of that régime's disregard for our Organization's resolutions and decisions. Neither the spectacular departure of Mr. Botha nor the fancy diplomatic footwork of his successor can hide the omnipresence of apartheid. There are still restrictions on the press, and arbitrary arrest of the régime's political opponents is the daily lot of the people of South Africa.

The mockery of elections that exclude 75 per cent of the population exposes the stubborn, racist nature of an increasingly condemned system. Those elections are not only contrary to the legal norms of the United Nations, but flagrantly violate the right of the South African people freely to decide their own future on the basis of the principle of one person, one vote.

Meanwhile, support for the African National Congress of South Africa, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and all those others that are fighting the anachronistic system of apartheid must become more real, and international action to increase awareness of the problem must be continued and intensified.

The Government of Guinea endorses the recommendations of the latest Summit of the non-aligned countries, held in Belgrade from 4 to 8 September this year, which called on the international community to take concerted action to compel the apartheid régime to answer for its crimes against mankind.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

Pretoria is pushing its arrogance even further beyond the limits, by stepping up its acts of aggression and destabilization against the front-line and other neighbouring States. That State terrorism has led to disturbing population movements in the region, jeopardizing the economic and social balance. I therefore repeat the appeal made in the Oslo Declaration of August 1988 on humanitarian aid to States suffering so much from that scourge.

Elsewhere on the continent we should support the commendable efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and all others of good will to establish conditions favourable to a climate of peace in Chad, Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan and Mozambique. My Government supports this peace process, which is based on dialogue, the search for agreement and mediation.

We also have hopes of a final settlement of the question of Western Sahara, through the holding of the self-determination referendum.

The talks now under way between France and the Comoros reflect the willingness of the two parties to reach a just solution to the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte.

As for Lebanon, my Government appreciates the responsible role being played by the Tripartite Committee of the Arab Heads of State with the aim of putting an end to the unspeakable suffering of the people of Lebanon caused by the civil war.

The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East crisis. Therefore, any viable solution must involve the following factors: Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied territories, including Jerusalem; the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - particularly its right to a homeland; recognition of the State of Palestine and the peace initiative of President Yasser Arafat; and, finally, the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

Guinea welcomes the cease-fire in the conflict between Iran and Iraq, and urges the two parties, under the auspices of the United Nations, to move their positions beyond the current situation of no war, no peace, and to establish an atmosphere of good neighbourliness, in keeping with Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

Despite the meagre results of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, consultations must continue with a view to establishing more favourable conditions for the resumption and eventual success of the work of that Conference. The dialogue that has begun between the leaders of China and the Soviet Union will certainly help to ease the situation.

Despite the withdrawal of foreign troops, the fighting has become even more deadly in Afghanistan, so there is an urgent need fully to implement the letter and spirit of the Geneva Agreements, including providing increased food aid to the Afghan refugees and ensuring their repatriation and their speedier reintegration into society.

With regard to New Caledonia, the Matignon Agreements, signed in Paris on 26 June 1988 by all the parties, marked an important stage towards the realization by the New Caledonian people of their aspirations.

Only respect for territorial integrity and national unity can help bring about peace in Cyprus and the Korean peninsula. The Korean people is waging a legitimate struggle, worthy of our full support, for the peaceful reunification of its country, without outside interference.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

Similarly, we support the current negotiations between the Cypriot Government and the Turkish community, under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

The situation in Central America is also a matter of serious concern. My Government welcomes the efforts of the Heads of State of the region, and of other Latin American countries, to achieve a final agreement, in keeping with the spirit of the Esquipulas II and Tela meetings.

In opening this session on 19 September 1989, which was also the International Day of Peace - and peace is so very dear to mankind - the international community's intention was, in our view, to urge all those of good will to ensure that this year again we shall add one more stone to the fine house we are called upon to erect together.

At no time in the past 40 years has peace been so near at hand than it is now. After having been threatened for so long by antagonistic ideologies, chauvinism and passion, peace is now looming on the horizon, not as the light at sunset but as the light of the sun rising inevitably towards the zenith.

That is why the Government of Guinea is convinced of the following: disarmament is the business of all States; nuclear disarmament is still the priority, but conventional disarmament should also be accorded the importance it warrants; the creation and extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens security; chemical weapons must be eliminated; there is a symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, since the resources freed by disarmament can be used for economic and social progress.

While most speakers have shown a certain optimism with regard to the resolution of many political crises, the same cannot be said with regard to economic matters. The main feature of contemporary international relations is interdependence between political stability and economic progress.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

The North-South dialogue our countries have so much yearned for is still deadlocked. In the meantime, the gap between the rich countries and the other countries is widening, as is clearly shown by the persistence of the current world economic crisis.

Arbitrary prices for commodities and for goods manufactured by the North completely negates measures that are being put forward to ease the foreign-debt-servicing burden. Trade is carried out in a discriminatory manner. Our countries still do not have access to modern science and technology. Financial flows to the South are becoming increasingly rare while paradoxically, the North is accentuating the factors responsible for the continued financial bleeding of the South.

With regard to the question of debt, indebtedness continues to absorb the fruit of the efforts of the poor countries, in particular in Africa, where the income is falling significantly in spite of the harsh measures taken in structural adjustments.

While some creditor countries have agreed to forgive official debt - for which my country expresses its sincere gratitude - it is nevertheless clear that the solution to the economic crisis rests mainly on promoting remunerative prices for commodities.

It is fitting to emphasize that the critical economic and social situation in the countries of the South - aggravated in the case of some by a growing influx of refugees and displaced persons - is not conducive to ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights called for by the international community as a whole.

The various United Nations development decades have not yielded significant results. Hence, it is essential to prepare the kind of international strategy that will allow us to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In this regard, the

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

convening in September 1990 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the holding in April 1990 of the special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation, as well as the implementation of a strategy within the context of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, will provide added impetus to efforts for the establishment of a new international economic order.\*

Environmental degradation is today a reality that can only be dealt with at a world-wide level. Deforestation, gaps in the ozone layer, pollution and natural disasters have all overwhelmed the ecosystem and endangered life.

My delegation recognizes that the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme have already begun to study climatic change through the setting up of an intergovernmental working group.

We also support the strengthening of the programme on climatology already in place. We believe that in so doing we will help avoid the fragmentation of research in this area at a time of international economic difficulties.

On the question of toxic wastes, the cross-border transport and dumping of such wastes has negative effects on development and on the environment that call for a greater awareness and the speedy adoption of a world convention.

With regard to human rights, let me point out that in my country we say that the human face of poverty, despair and ignorance is often that of the woman, the innocent child, the old person living alone or the handicapped person without resources. Hence my Government clearly sees the right to development as a specific human right. That is why the Military Committee for National Recovery believes that eliminating material poverty, social inequality and ignorance is the sine qua non for promoting human rights.

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\* Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Traore, Guinea)

As far as the Republic of Guinea is concerned, freedom, whether it be individual or collective, either is or is not; it must be seen as a whole, as an essential benefit that cannot be either negotiated or forfeited. It is the most valuable resource God has given to man.

Accordingly, the national authorities have advocated that international legal instruments on human rights be included in the domestic legal system of our country through the adoption of legislation.

There is a phenomenon today that has assumed unmanageable proportions: I refer to the problem of drugs and psychotropic substances about which the alarm has sounded in many countries. There is no doubt that the use of such substances is injurious to health and corrupts the youth, which is the most vulnerable sector of the population and the hope and the future of human society.

The struggle against this endemic evil necessarily involves international co-operation in stopping the production and consumption of drugs and their illicit trafficking. The example of the United States of America and Colombia is one that could well be followed. It is the concrete expression of an active solidarity that is essential if we are to erect an impregnable barrier against this scourge.

I now turn to terrorism. Whether it be by an individual or a group of individuals, or the deliberate policy of a State, terrorism is criminal, and the Guinean Government condemns it most vigorously. Because terrorism threatens or kills innocent persons and undermines international security, there cannot be any moral justification for it. Furthermore, it cannot become a tool in the legitimate struggle waged by peoples for freedom and emancipation.

The preservation of peace and the struggle for progress requires democratization in international relations. Hence we must step up the role and

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influence of this world Organization while ensuring respect for and the promotion of the norms of international law. We must also take a fresh look at the challenges before us, in particular the economic challenge.

It is encouraging to see that the United Nations is now reviewing its role and doing its utmost to discharge its historic mission. The world is changing quickly and the United Nations cannot stand aloof. Its effectiveness depends on how it can adapt to the realities of the twenty-first century - that is to say, its ability to conceive a strategy in keeping with a universality that is its essential characteristic.

Today the trend on the part of us all is towards greater love for our fellow man, for the earth and for the heavens, and we must all resolutely look towards the future for the advent of a new world, young and beautiful, based on justice, freedom, prosperity and peace.

## ADDRESS BY MR. GEOFFREY PALMER, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will hear a statement by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of New Zealand, His Excellency the Right Honourable Geoffrey Palmer. I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. PALMER (New Zealand): It is a great pleasure to see a distinguished leader such as Ambassador Garba presiding over this Assembly. We have come to know him well from contacts between New Zealand and Nigeria, and we are confident that the Assembly is in very good hands.

I last attended the General Assembly in 1985. I was then the Deputy Prime Minister of a recently elected Labour Government. I spoke on behalf of New Zealand in the general debate during the fortieth session. That year, of course, we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

We all spoke with pride and enthusiasm about the Charter. We analysed its potential and looked at what had been achieved in the United Nations system over 40 years. And it was true: much had been accomplished. But we all knew in our heart of hearts that despite the praise, the plaudits and the pizzazz, it threatened to be a hollow anniversary.

The failure to make progress on nuclear disarmament had distorted the fabric of international life. Seemingly intractable conflicts proliferated in many parts of the world. The peace-keeping machinery of the United Nations lay almost dormant and apparently dismissed. In our own region, the South Pacific, we watched anxiously the process of decolonization and self-determination in New Caledonia, where violence seemed imminent. Sadly, these fears proved well founded. In South

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Africa, the régime in Pretoria continued year by year its unremitting and abhorrent practice of apartheid and its illegal occupation of Namibia. In 1985 there was all too much evidence that respect for international law and the basic norms of the United Nations Charter were being ignored. We saw the International Court being treated with cynical disdain. There was a steady erosion of State willingness to accept the rule of law and compulsory jurisdiction. New Zealand itself, in 1985, had been the victim of an unlawful act of force during the Rainbow Warrior incident. I was obliged to draw that incident to the Assembly's attention in some detail.

But times have changed. Four years later I am back in New York and I find a new picture. We have turned a corner. There have been encouraging signs concerning many of the intractable problems that we faced in 1985. It is a matter of enormous satisfaction to New Zealand that the United Nations, has been a key component in these developments. Even in the darkest days of cynicism about the United Nations, New Zealand stood up and spoke out in support of the United Nations, the Charter principles and the rule of law. We applaud what has happened and what is continuing to happen. Let me cite some examples.

In the area of peace-keeping, we see the United Nations proving what can be done, with hard-won progress in the conflict between Iran and Iraq. In southern Africa, a very important step has been taken in Namibia. New Zealand is pleased to have been able to contribute personnel to United Nations forces in both those situations, and also in Afghanistan.

In the Pacific, we see grounds for hope in New Caledonia. We look forward to a genuine act of self-determination in accordance with United Nations principles.

On disarmament, we have also seen a marked change in the atmosphere, in the attitudes of the two super-Powers. One major agreement has been achieved: the intermediate-nuclear-forces Treaty. Other agreements, on strategic nuclear forces

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and conventional forces, are being negotiated. We in New Zealand appreciate the complexities of these negotiations. We applaud what has been achieved and what is being done. But our message must continue to be put bluntly: Do not return to the snail's pace of the 1970s and early 1980s. Deep cuts in strategic weapons and conventional forces are urgent. We have a historical opportunity that may not come again for a very long time. If the momentum slows and the moment is lost, history and all humanity will judge those responsible very harshly indeed.

I also have to say quite plainly that we remain disappointed that the United Nations plays a less than central role in key disarmament negotiations. The United Nations must be a primary forum for the discussion of disarmament issues and the eventual negotiation of disarmament treaties. New Zealand, together with Australia, has a special interest in promoting, through the United Nations system, progress towards a comprehensive test ban. We again urge in the strongest terms that the powerful few reconsider our resolution with an open mind.

New Zealand has a particularly well known position on the question of nuclear weapons. I want to reiterate what I said to the Assembly in 1985:

"We have ... declared unambiguously that we do not want any country to defend New Zealand with nuclear weapons ... We will not have any nuclear weapons on our territory." (A/40/PV.7, p. 66)

Since 1985 this policy has attracted widespread public support in New Zealand. This support continues to grow. It is clearly reflected in public opinion polls. New Zealand is, and will remain, a nuclear-weapon-free State. Consistent with that position we urge, in the strongest terms, that nuclear testing and nuclear weapons themselves be eliminated at the earliest possible date.

Another field in which we have observed significant developments in recent years is the rule of international law. It was a matter of great encouragement to many small countries when last year, in the Assembly, President Gorbachev announced

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that the Soviet Union was adopting a new policy towards the International Court of Justice. We also warmly welcome the fact that the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement, at their meeting at The Hague in July, began a constructive analysis of the Court and the role of international law. These developments went further and were reinforced by the welcome news of the recent agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the compulsory settlement of disputes in the fields of drug trafficking and terrorism. New Zealand urges all countries to review their positions on compulsory jurisdiction and the settlement of disputes by third-party mechanisms. In this context I would also refer to the variety of roles that the Secretary-General can play to resolve disputes.

I should also like to acknowledge in this Hall the people in the United Nations system who have done so much to ensure the progress made over the past few years. I do not mean only the staff that supports meetings here and in Geneva. I remember also the unseen United Nations employees and volunteers who work in the field, often in very dangerous environments and suffering considerable hardship, negotiating cease-fires, organizing peace-keeping forces, serving in peace-keeping operations and running emergency relief and development assistance programmes. I want them to know that the people of New Zealand welcome and appreciate their very real contributions.

It would be tempting at this point to conclude that the United Nations is in good shape, that things are all headed in the right direction and that we can all go home feeling good about what we have achieved. But that is not the case. The United Nations system is still struggling with major problems. The evil of apartheid is still with us. We have not done enough to reduce poverty and indebtedness. Political solutions still elude us in the Middle East and Cambodia. But I have to tell the Assembly that, in New Zealand's assessment, a much larger

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problem has crept up on the world's leaders. It has caught us unawares. The problem I refer to is the health of the planet Earth itself.

I know that the United Nations has not ignored the environment. Mr. Tolba and his staff in the United Nations Environment Programme have laboured valiantly. They have had real success on ozone depletion with the Montreal Protocol and, more recently, with the Helsinki Declaration. We in New Zealand have worked very hard indeed to support their efforts, and we shall continue to do so.

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The general debate is itself demonstrating the growing international concern about the global environment. Action is under way in other parts of the United Nations system as well. A major United Nations conference on environment and development is scheduled for 1992, and it will offer a timely opportunity to take stock of the measures necessary to protect planet Earth.

New Zealand strongly endorsed the decision of the UNEP Governing Council in May this year to identify, in preparation for the 1992 conference, the eight critical global environmental problems: atmospheric degradation, fresh-water limitations, pollution of the oceans, deforestation and the others. I also want to acknowledge the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is proving to be a very useful and effective mechanism, and New Zealand is playing an active role in its work.

All these measures are consuming a great deal of time and energy. Environmental statements, seminars and conferences have become the political flavour of the month. But it sometimes seems that a lot of talk takes the place of action.

The 1992 conference will give us an ideal chance to prove to all the doubters and denigrators of the United Nations the real worth of the Organization. Our efforts in the coming weeks must be focused and they must be effective. We need vision, courage and action on the environment, not just talk. I want to ask some hard questions.

Politicians are sometimes accused of getting on the green bandwagon because it is politically safe, simplistic and relatively cost-free. But I want to put it to the Assembly that anyone here who believes that environment issues are a soft option is sadly misguided.

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The global environmental crisis is real. Human development has altered the global ecosystem in which we live. We have been taking the good out of the air, the sea and the land and putting back waste and poison. For most of human history the impact was so slight as to barely affect the balance. But in the last 50 years humanity has wrought havoc on this Earth. We have suddenly come to the knowledge that we can affect the ecological balance very seriously. More frighteningly, we have discovered that the balance has already been changed. The question now is, have we damaged our planet beyond repair? Can we get back to equilibrium? Can we arrest the process of change? The jury, of course, is still out on these questions. If the answer is that the change is irreversible, the ultimate effects could be just as catastrophic for humanity as global nuclear war.

I saw a cartoon recently. It pictured some aliens from outer space landing on a ravaged Earth where human life had ceased. One alien says to the other, "It's too bad. They just achieved general and complete disarmament and some hole in the ozone layer got them".

The message I have for the United Nations system is that we must look urgently at our priorities and our institutions. We must give real priority to the problems of the environment. We must give them attention at least equal to that which we devote to the political and security issues which have mesmerized the United Nations system and Governments for so long.

Degradation of the environment is a problem that threatens our security every bit as gravely as the arms race. It affects everyone. But we must recognize that, unlike the issue of nuclear disarmament, where a few very powerful countries have control of the means of destruction, every country in the United Nations, no matter how small, contributes in some way to the threat of environmental destruction. All contribute; all suffer. Pollution recognizes no political boundaries. It is therefore beyond any doubt a problem for the United Nations.

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Of course, not every country is equally responsible, and not every country stands to be equally or as rapidly affected. Sometimes the innocent will suffer more than the guilty. It is a fact that more than 80 per cent of the greenhouse gases are produced by a small group of economically privileged countries. It is also a fact that the contribution of the developed world to the depletion of the ozone layer is overwhelming. New Zealand understands the anxiety these facts cause to the peoples of the developing world.

We are especially conscious of the plight of the countries of the South Pacific. Last year I represented New Zealand at the South Pacific Forum meeting. We discussed climate change and the disastrous impact of possible sea-level rises. Imagine being the President or leader of an atoll country in the Pacific, such as Tuvalu or Kiribati or Tokelau, and learning that the effluent and byproducts of other people's development not only threaten sustainable development in your small island country but indeed threaten to submerge every bit of land on which your people live. Small island communities in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean face similar problems. Pollution could literally wipe them off the face of the Earth.

Or imagine representing one of the countries in the South Pacific with few or no natural resources other than the fish in the ocean. You discover that foreign fishermen from outside the region have begun to use in your region a fishing technology not used there before, a technology which threatens to collapse the albacore tuna fishery which is of vital economic importance to the coastal States of the region.

I am speaking of the "wall of death": the enormous drift-nets which in the last few years have been employed in the South Pacific by distant water fishermen. The technology is not new in itself. What is new, and what makes it quite unacceptable, is a new technique for the use of drift-nets. This involves several

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vessels working in co-operation, each deploying a series of very long nets. Each net can be up to 50 kilometres in length. Each vessel sets a number of these nets in a very long line across the ocean. They sometimes cover thousands of kilometres of ocean. In the North Pacific, at the height of the season, an estimated 50,000 kilometres of drift-nets are set nightly. They then drift, literally like a wall of death. They catch and kill, like a vacuum cleaner, virtually every living creature, including some endangered species, that comes in contact with them.

The indiscriminate nature of the catch makes this an unacceptable fishing technology. Turtles, whales, dolphins, birds: all are trapped and killed. Large percentages of the catch are lost or wasted when the nets are recovered. In the North Pacific, drift-net fishing has seriously damaged valuable salmon stocks.

I have to say that this technology was rejected unanimously by the countries of the South Pacific. In July of this year at the South Pacific Forum meeting at Tarawa, South Pacific Heads of Government adopted a Declaration condemning the practice of large-scale drift-net fishing.

But "wall-of-death" fishing is not just a moral problem. It is a legal, political and economic problem, and has global implications. Freedom of the high seas cannot be invoked to protect what is in effect a systematic assault on the regional marine ecosystem. There was a time when some argued that freedom of the high seas legitimized unacceptable and illegal practices. But customary international law has responded over the years to outlaw unreasonable and repugnant practices. At the present time, international law is again responding to the unacceptable and unreasonable use of the high seas for drift-net fishing.

There is already some evidence of the international community's response to this unreasonable use of the high seas. Many Pacific island States, including New Zealand, have already taken action to outlaw the practice in their domestic regulations and in their 200-mile zones. The Tarawa Declaration was vigorously

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supported only four weeks ago at the South Pacific Conference on Nature and Conservation of Protected Areas. It will be reinforced and codified later this year when the South Pacific countries adopt a regional convention to prevent "wall-of-death" fishing in our region.

I want to make it clear that what is troubling the South Pacific nations is not the practice of small-scale in-shore use of drift-nets of limited size, which are used by various developing countries. Our concern is with the new and highly destructive phenomenon of very long pelagic drift-nets.\*

The Tarawa Declaration called on the international community to support the position of the South Pacific countries on drift-netting. We have asked the Secretary-General to circulate the Tarawa Declaration as a United Nations document for the information of all delegations.

The South Pacific will be vigorously pursuing this issue bilaterally, regionally and globally. We will be proceeding in a dispassionate, rational and reasonable way. But those who engage in this ecologically irresponsible activity should be in no doubt that the techniques they use are unacceptable wherever they are used. New Zealand looks to the United Nations to support the Tarawa Declaration. Resolutions in the United Nations system to combat drift-netting are inevitable if these practices are not phased out quickly.

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\* Mr. Mudenge (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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New Zealand, in close co-operation with the South Pacific countries and other Members of the United Nations who have declared their abhorrence of the new drift-net technology, will be pursuing this issue within the United Nations system. At the present session opportunities exist under agenda items before several Committees of this Assembly.

We note that the Government of the Republic of Korea has temporarily halted drift-net fishing in the South Pacific. That is welcome. We also welcome the decision by Japan in the past few weeks to reduce its drift-net fishing fleet. This is a step in the right direction. But a cessation of this fishing technique is the only ecologically acceptable solution. Only Taiwan has yet to respond to the concerns of the Pacific countries on this matter. We urge all concerned to act quickly.

Indeed, the state of our global fisheries is a good example of the broader environmental problems that our planet is facing.

There is really only one international measure regulating fisheries that proceeds on acceptably sound ecosystem principles. That is the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine and Living Resources. In this connection, I would remind the Assembly of the important and valuable environmental protection measures that have been achieved under the Antarctic Treaty, and note that further significant steps will be sponsored by New Zealand at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Paris next week. The Antarctic Treaty is an effective institution. We are making it even more effective in the environmental field. It is an institution that should be supported by the United Nations General Assembly.

Even 20 years ago it was generally assumed that the fish in the open sea were inexhaustible. In general, anyone could go fishing without limitation. Yet we all now know that the biomass of any fishery can easily be overfished. We face a situation where the world's fishing capacity may already be close to, or in excess

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of, sustainable yield from the commercial fisheries in the world's oceans. We are technically capable of catching fish faster than they can breed. Fishing rights are therefore tightly regulated and licensed. Will we soon have to apply to our atmosphere regulatory principles similar to those we are now applying to our fisheries.

I have to say that, if this is the case, then the example we have set with our fisheries is a frightening one. Drift-netting is simply the latest in a long history of irresponsible fishing practices. It is just as well that humanity has not depended on fisheries alone for its survival. The record of international fisheries management is such a sorry one that, if that had been the case, whole populations would have long since perished in the wake of collapsed fisheries.

But the reality is that there is no alternative atmosphere to breathe. There is only one global climate. We must do better than the halting attempts at fisheries conservation in that respect.

I have some very specific and challenging thoughts about where we go from here to deal with the problems of the global environment generally.

The intimate connection between the global environment and the global economy is beyond dispute. It does not need to be argued here. The conclusion of the Brundtland report that development only makes sense if it is sustainable has been widely recognized.

The concept of sustainable development is, in its own right, an enormous challenge for the international community. But we must add to that challenge the need to address the disturbances that have been caused to the natural ecosystems. The ozone layer is already seriously depleted. Disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes has become a global threat through dumping in the oceans. We have already witnessed unacceptable attempts to pay developing countries to accept a role as waste receivers. Acid rain and desertification threaten economic progress on

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several continents. Deforestation is limiting the environment's capacity to heal itself and, more importantly, our atmosphere and our climate itself are threatened.

Restoring the equilibrium, in all of these areas is going to involve quite significant impacts on the global economy.

I do not believe that the full extent of those impacts is yet appreciated by the general public in any of our countries. It is time that ordinary people everywhere stopped and thought for a moment. It is time to acknowledge that we are all adding to the environmental problems every day and that there are no free rides. In the end, we are all going to have to contribute to the solutions, and this will require a major change of attitude all over the world.

In this connection I want to pay tribute to the foresight shown by the Prime Ministers of the Netherlands, France and Norway, who in March this year brought together 24 Heads of Government to consider the solutions. I was privileged to represent New Zealand at that meeting. We adopted the Hague Declaration. That document called for the development of some very new and important principles to protect the global environment.

What then does all this mean in practice? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its Working Groups are focusing on that issue in a great deal of detail. But it seems to me that there are two very clear messages for the future: first, if effective measures are to be taken to reduce greenhouse emissions some quite radical economic measures will be required. Secondly, as is clearly spelt out in the Hague Declaration, some major institutional changes are going to be required.

As to economic measures, these will prove particularly radical for some economic theorists in many countries, including New Zealand. As many of you will know, my Government has drastically reformed the New Zealand economy. We have eliminated subsidies, deregulated commercial activity and reversed the stultifying

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effects of unnecessary governmental intervention in the economy. And it has proved to be good economic medicine.

But it is abundantly clear from the evidence of environmental impacts that the definition of "necessary governmental intervention" is going to have to change. Indeed, in New Zealand we have already begun to implement interventions to protect the global environment. The first step was the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in 1988. As a second step, I will shortly be putting before our Parliament legislation going beyond the Montreal Protocol. By 1994 we shall reduce consumption of chlorofluorocarbons to only 5 per cent of 1986 levels, and we shall phase them out altogether by the year 2000. Thirdly, to address our national policies for resource management, I have commissioned the complete overhaul of our law relating to land use, water use, minerals, pollution and hazardous substances. Legislation radically reforming all these areas will be submitted to our Parliament before the end of the year. The New Zealand Government will make sustainable development the guiding principle behind decision-making in each of these areas.

But it is clear that these interventions will be insignificant by comparison with what will be required to combat the greenhouse effect. I am aware that there are still many unknowns relating to the greenhouse effect, but the evidence overwhelmingly points to the need to act.

Effective action will require measures to reduce carbon dioxide and other industrial emissions. We shall have to look at ways to encourage measures of reforestation that absorb carbon dioxide. We shall have to look at energy use, and that will have spin-off implications for economic activity and development throughout all our economies.

(Mr. Palmer, New Zealand)

But there are solutions as well as problems. Radical improvements in energy efficiency and energy conservation make sense economically as well as environmentally. But these alone will not be enough. The United Nations may even need to consider the possibility that, within the limitations of present technology, if development is to be sustainable, it must be rationed - in other words, that humanity has reached the point in history where sustainable development is only possible if "rights to pollute" are allocated according to agreed criteria. New Zealand would be the first to acknowledge that this proposition is a frightening one, and it is all the more frightening because of its potential impacts on the aspirations of the developing world for economic and social development.

New Zealand understands that we cannot solve global environmental problems unless we can work simultaneously and in a co-ordinated fashion to eradicate poverty. Sustainable development, in its true sense, will require action: to relieve debt burdens; to liberalize multilateral trade; and to promote flows of development assistance without extra conditions. The burdens of improving the global environment must be shared by us all, and they must be shared fairly. That means that some who are already at higher stages of development will have to carry the greatest part of the burden.

So clearly we are facing an immensely complex negotiating task. It involves balancing a wide range of technical, scientific and political judgements and meshing them with international economic, trade and aid policies. This is a task which requires the most delicate and co-ordinated oversight. Almost by definition it is beyond the mandate of any existing institution.

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That brings me to my second major point - institutional reform. We are conscious that a number of proposals have been canvassed in recent times for institutional reform. They range from a new form of Security Council to an ad hoc institution with limited scope and a limited mandate. We are also conscious that existing machinery, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and others, must be given the room and support necessary to achieve their functions while we are discussing the institutional reforms of the future.

We accept that reform will have to be evolutionary. But a United Nations declaration on the environment may be needed, and in our view we need a vision that is clear and cogent, because if by 1992 existing institutions are not coping adequately, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will need to address squarely the key issue of institutional reform. I have no doubt the issue will not go away. It will have to be faced. In New Zealand's judgement, the traditional response of international law, developing international legal standards in small incremental steps, each of which must subsequently be ratified by all countries, is no longer appropriate to deal with the highly complex environmental problems of the future.

The time has come for something more innovative, for a conceptual leap forward in institutional terms. And we see the need for the establishment of a new organ in the United Nations system - perhaps it could be called the "Environmental Protection Council". The United Nations already has a Security Council. We also have an Economic and Social Council and a Trusteeship Council. We have two chapters of the United Nations Charter on the settlement of disputes and the maintenance of peace. We have a chapter laying down the rules and principles with

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respect to Non-Self-Governing Territories. I have no doubt that if the Charter were being drawn up today, there would be widespread support for including among the organs of the United Nations a body empowered to take binding decisions on global environmental issues. In our view, nothing less than an institution with this status will command the necessary respect and authority to achieve what is required.

Perhaps the most effective way to achieve this would be through the inclusion in the United Nations Charter of a new chapter dealing with the environment. Another option would be a major declaration of principle adopted by the United Nations. But we do not envisage any new body replacing UNEP. Far from it. UNEP brings together vital scientific and technical expertise. It has demonstrated both skill and ability in constructing and implementing programmes to analyse global issues and to support operational activities at the regional level. This is a vital function. Not only must it continue, but UNEP's role of developing scientific, technical and policy advice must be enhanced. UNEP may need to be built in as an integral part of the new structure. The missing institutional link, however, is the equivalent of a legislature. We would envisage the new environmental protection council becoming the point in the United Nations system which links the streams of economic and environmental advice. It would perform the function that currently falls between the cracks in the mandates of all the existing organizations. It would have responsibility for taking co-ordinated decisions on sustainable policies for global environmental protection. It would be empowered to take binding decisions. And if decisions are to be binding, the membership of the Council may need to be very wide - perhaps including all Members of the United Nations. But the key thing is that it should have power to act - not just to talk.

(Mr. Palmer, New Zealand)

The time is coming for a bold new step in developing the structures of the United Nations. We must show that the United Nations is ready to meet new challenges and meet them by changing itself to cope with the needs of humanity in the course of the next century.

In 1945, the present Charter was born out of the conviction that the horrors of the Second World War must never be repeated. The environmental challenge which we now face may be every bit as devastating for humanity. Let us hope that we have learned from the past and that it will prove possible to put in place effective institutions now, rather than repeat the sad experience of the League of Nations, a well-meaning but inadequate institution. If we wait for the aftermath of an ecological disaster, it may be too late.

May I conclude with a quotation from one of my predecessors, Prime Minister Peter Fraser, who in his statement at San Francisco, on 1 May 1945, at the adoption of the present Charter, had this to say:

"The failure of the League of Nations, one of the noblest conceptions in the history of mankind, was a moral failure on the part of the individual members, and was not due to any fundamental defect of the machinery of the League. [It] failed because its members would not perform what they undertook to perform. It failed because of the recession that took place in public morality ... It failed because the rule of expediency replaced that of moral principles.

"I would therefore stress that unless in the future we have the moral rectitude and determination to stand by our engagements and our principles, then ... this new organization will avail us nothing, the sufferings and the sacrifices our people have endured will avail us nothing, and the countless lives of those who have died in this struggle for security and freedom will have been sacrificed in vain."

(Mr. Palmer, New Zealand)

These words are a solemn reminder to us all that in the end it is not only a question of institutions, of conventions and protocols. It is, in the final analysis, the scourge of pollution, like the scourge of war, that can and will destroy us unless we are willing to put principle above expediency. Strong medicine is called for for a sick planet. We have no choice. And if we take no action, we will have no future.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. WIJERATNE (Sri Lanka) (spoke in Sinhala; English text furnished by the delegation): As Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, I appear before the Assembly for the first time to speak on behalf of my country. I am very happy to address these few words to the Assembly.

(continued in English)

Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, I wish to extend to Mr. Joseph Garba our warmest good wishes and congratulations on his election as President of the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Sri Lanka has close and cordial relations with Nigeria, not only at the bilateral level but also in the forums of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Commonwealth, in which we have closely co-operated. I should also like to express our appreciation for the manner in which his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, the Foreign Minister for Argentina, presided over the forty-third session.

(Mr. Wijeratne, Sri Lanka)

May I take this opportunity to convey to Ambassador Garba the greetings and good wishes of His Excellency Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, the President of Sri Lanka, and the people of Sri Lanka and, through him, to all the representatives assembled here today.

We live in a time of change, a time of uncertainty, as well as a time of promise and hope. Each of us, the powerful and the weak alike, must respond to the challenge of change. As individual independent States we must provide, in our domestic context, the equality of opportunity, the freedom and the support essential for our citizens to fulfil their aspirations. As a global community, we need to respond collectively to the challenge of rapidly evolving international developments and conduct our political and economic relations with each other to ensure the benefit of the entire world community.

The nexus between day-to-day occurrences in our own nations and broader global developments is dramatically brought into focus at the General Assembly each year. Here each representative brings before this parliament of nations the hopes and expectations that motivate his people as well as the fears and frustrations that blight their security and well-being. It is evident in these presentations that what most of us are unable to achieve through our individual and separate endeavours we need to approach as joint ventures in international co-operation. Our national options are often circumscribed by factors that lie beyond our national boundaries. That is equally true of political and economic matters.

Developing countries like my own are affected by the momentous transformations taking place at the present time in international economic relations. Science and technology are revolutionizing traditional patterns of industrial activity and production. Centrally planned economic systems are being radically restructured, with decision-making being decentralized and economic freedom being encouraged. A process of integration or globalization transcending national frontiers is

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fundamentally transforming financial and other markets. Integration of some key sectors of the world economy has led to a diffusion of economic power and the emergence of new centres of influence. 1992 will usher a new economic force into operation. As part of the relaxation of political tensions, co-operation between systems previously thought to be irreconcilable is further enhancing the process of integration. World economic output in 1988 expanded more than had been expected. International trade and investments grew vigorously.

The number of developing countries with growth rates in excess of 5 per cent increased as well, but for most developing countries whose economies have felt the ripples of these trends the economic environment has remained unfavourable, even hostile. Growth rates have stagnated or registered a decline. Prices for the products of developing countries have fluctuated to their detriment. While our products have indeed been competitive, many have nevertheless sustained losses in overall returns, having to contend with forbidding obstacles of quotas, tariff and non-tariff barriers and other restrictions which limit access to markets.

One can argue about the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and commitments undertaken in the Uruguay Round aimed at an equitable global system of trade exchanges. The telling reality is, however, that the percentage share of the developing countries in international trade exchanges has deteriorated from about 25 per cent at the beginning of the 1980s to below 20 per cent last year. Trade is a vital life-line for developing countries.

At the summit conference of the non-aligned countries in Belgrade, which I attended, the leaders of over 100 States emphasized the vital need for the interests of the developing countries to be adequately reflected in sectors of special importance to them, such as textiles and clothing, agricultural products, tropical products and natural-resource-based products.

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It is essential that sustained efforts be exerted, including those within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to stabilize commodity prices at an adequately remunerative level. Reasonable commodity prices and fair market access for developing countries' trade would be more welcome than infusions of aid. What is required is steady, predictable export earnings for developing countries which they could deploy to combat poverty and want.

Sri Lanka has initiated innovative methods for the alleviation of poverty by seeking to tap the latent productive energies and rich creativity of the very segments of our population that are most adversely affected. These segments of our population have for too long been considered dependent. The Janasaviya movement - as it is called - has been set in motion to encourage about a million poor families to participate in the national productive endeavour, which could eventually involve even their entry into the export sector as well.

One of the main factors in society that makes poverty especially intractable is homelessness. Shanties, slums and other sub-human dwellings: they are the lot of countless millions of people in the developing world today. It is his deep awareness that investment in housing necessarily means disinvestment in poverty that led my President, His Excellency Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, then Prime Minister, to propose to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session that an international year be designated to advance the cause of shelter for the homeless in the world. The international community responded to his call, and 1987 became the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

As part of our own response to the challenge of alleviating poverty in Sri Lanka, we have taken many strides forward in our housing programmes. A programme for constructing 100,000 houses was completed. It was followed by a programme of building 1 million houses. We are now engaged in developing and

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implementing a programme of building an additional 1.5 million houses. We shall continue to build on these programmes. We shall constantly raise our targets. As the country that proposed international action for ending the scourge of homelessness, we are committed to achieving the United Nations target of shelter for all by the year 2000 ahead of that year.

A further initiative being considered by Sri Lanka concerns the development of the resources of the oceans. Despite the rich promise of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, many developing countries have still been unable to reap its full potential owing to insufficient awareness and the lack of national capabilities in the ocean sector. My delegation hopes to present an initiative at the session this year with the objective of launching an endeavour at the global level aimed at the realization of the benefits of ocean development. Sri Lanka looks forward to the suggestions and support of other members.

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In an adverse economic climate, developing countries faced with the political and social imperative of providing for the well-being of their people have slipped into the deeper and more deadly snare of debt. The external debt of developing countries is now over \$1,320 billion. Such astronomically high debts and debt service ratios have exhausted the economies of many developing countries. The situation has indeed deteriorated to such an extent that the net outflow of resources from the developing world to the developed economies exceeds the much-vaunted aid transfusions. At the level of the aggregate of the capital-importing developing countries, 1989 will mark the seventh consecutive year of such negative transfers.

Sri Lanka, relatively better placed, nevertheless has a rising debt service ratio of 28.7 per cent. This negates what advances have been made in promoting export earnings. It restricts resources for investment, holds back the maintenance and development of infrastructure and inhibits long-term improvements in the economy.

Developing countries have also negotiated assistance and support from the major multilateral financial institutions for agreed economic programmes of a remedial or development-oriented nature. Such support, which has undoubtedly brought relief, has not always been available without a heavy price tag to be paid in political and social currency. Assistance and support has been forthcoming only on the basis of prior assent to certain policy prescriptions to be faithfully followed by the recipient State. The formula is familiar: restructuring of sectors of the economy; submission to realistic exchange rates - that is, effective devaluation; liberalization of import regulations; budget austerities compelling reduction or removal of consumer subsidies and other welfare benefits which have cushioned the poor; rationalization of the State sector and perhaps privatization.

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Stringent conditionality has been an inevitable element in assistance from multilateral institutions. Compliance often entails the imposition of unbearable economic and social burdens on the people and the real prospect, consequently, of political agitation, unrest and even violence. Non-compliance, on the other hand, can possibly mean an interruption, or even a cutoff, in support from the institutions concerned. It could also involve a diminution in the country's image of "aid-worthiness", with attendant consequences in its bilateral relations with donor countries. Here too, the nexus between political realities and economic exigencies becomes acutely evident. The multilateral institutions would do a major service if they took fuller account of the political and social fallout that awaits a country whose burden of conditionality weighs heaviest on its people.

Sri Lanka, with a population of 17 million projected for 1990, won its independence 41 years ago. Its population then stood at 7 million. The decisive lowering of the infant mortality rate from 140 per thousand before independence to 39 per thousand in the period 1980-1985 and the rise in life expectancy from 42 years before independence to over 70 years now are indices of the progress made by independent Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's immunization programmes among children, supported by the United Nations Children's Fund, will achieve their targets well before the stipulated date of December 1990. An advanced system of welfare facilities has been available to the population. These include free education, free medical services and subsidized food essentials and transport. A partial scaling-down of some of these facilities, partly brought about by the external environment I have described, a revolution of rising expectations and a complex of other political and social factors have led to frustration and unrest, particularly among our politically articulate youth, who account for about 44 per cent of

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Sri Lanka's population. Such frustrations have fuelled strong radical views. This has in turn led to a tragic state of violence in our society. A political dialogue to which all parties have been invited is now in progress to reconcile differences in approach to our current problems and to effect a speedy return to normalcy in the island. This situation needs to be differentiated from the developments which painfully forced Sri Lanka into world headlines in the early 1980s.

Coupled with ethnic considerations, a dangerous situation had arisen in the northern portions of the island. Violent militant groups within an ethnic minority, the Tamils, sought recourse to terrorism and violence to achieve their ends. It had reached a point in 1987 when, to deal with aspects of the problem which lay beyond our shores, Sri Lanka signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty of July 1987. A measure of stability was felt in the immediate aftermath of the Treaty, when the militant groups agreed to eschew violence and commence peaceful negotiations to redress their grievances. This period was all too short-lived. Despite the presence of peace-keeping forces sent to Sri Lanka in the context of the Treaty, a period of senseless violence and brutality recommenced in which civilians suffered a terrible toll.

An appeal was addressed to all militant groups by the President of Sri Lanka that they enter the mainstream of the peaceful democratic process. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have responded positively, and the Sri Lankan Government is now in the process of pursuing negotiations with its representatives.

The Sri Lankan Government has studied with interest the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Maldives in proposing that some mechanism should be devised within the United Nations to support the independence of small States in the event their security is threatened. The threat to small States may be an external one; more usually, it comes in the form of involvement or intervention in

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the internal affairs of small States. As developing countries, most of us face problems of national integration and consolidation. Ensuring social cohesion and harmony is another of our challenges. These problems we must face and resolve by the evolution of our own national life. External inputs dangerously inflame issues. Indeed, what served to aggravate the violence and insecurity of life in the north and east of Sri Lanka in recent years was the external support received by dissident groups. It militarized their campaign. It converted an essentially domestic conflict into one with international ramifications. It added new dimensions to the agony of the peoples of the region.

The non-aligned summit conference in Belgrade considered the question of international terrorism in all its forms. Heads of State at the summit noted that terrorism endangered the very territorial integrity and security of States. They called upon all States to fulfil their obligations under international law: obligations to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other States, or acquiescing in activities within their territories which encourage the perpetration of such acts. An insidious link exists between international terrorism, drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. Colombia's very survival as a State has been jeopardized by the evil plague of drugs. We applaud the efforts made by the President and Government of Colombia in combating this curse. The community of nations must, on a continuing basis, attack the unholy trinity of terrorism, drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. The Belgrade summit of non-aligned States supported in principle the convening of a United Nations conference which would, inter alia, define terrorism to distinguish it from the legitimate struggle of peoples for national liberation - a struggle which resolutely continues in Palestine and South Africa.

(Mr. Wijeratne, Sri Lanka)

As violence and insecurity continue in the region of the Middle East, support is universal for the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. The question of Palestine remains at the crux of the prevailing unrest in the Middle East. A comprehensive settlement is not possible without the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and the withdrawal of Israel from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. Only then could arrangements be guaranteed for the security of all States in the region within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

In southern Africa, the hated system of apartheid perpetrates its vicious acts of violence and repression against the majority black people of South Africa. The racist régime continues to destabilize its independent African neighbours. Apartheid cannot be reformed. Only decisive action by the international community, not excluding the imposition of mandatory sanctions, can bring down the evil edifice of apartheid.

In Namibia, after facing several obstacles, we are able to welcome the commencement of steps this year for the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibian independence. Sri Lanka looks forward very much to receiving independent Namibia as a full Member of the Organization in the very near future.

Nearer home, in South-West Asia, we welcome the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. We note with concern, however, that peace has not been completely restored to that country. The free exercise of the right to self-determination by all the Afghan people and the return, in conditions of safety and honour, of Afghan refugees are indispensable to any comprehensive political settlement of the problem.

(Mr. Wijeratne, Sri Lanka)

In South-East Asia, we believe that conflict and tension can be eased only on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign forces and the exercise of the right of the people of Cambodia freely to determine their destiny without outside pressure.

The continued presence of foreign occupation forces in the Republic of Cyprus obstructs the achievement of a lasting solution to all aspects of the question. Sri Lanka strongly supports the independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue his mission of good offices, and we appeal to all parties involved to co-operate with him in a constructive spirit.

I have touched briefly on a number of issues which have been on the Assembly's agenda for several years. Despite the many obstacles which continue to hinder their solution, there is much that offers hope and promise.

In a broad sense, the new co-operative relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union has eased tensions, particularly in Europe. We non-aligned States have had the opportunity to assess these developments at the summit conference held in Yugoslavia.

In the field of disarmament, the prospect of progress is more than illusory. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - is an important step in a long journey which has just begun. The threat of nuclear annihilation has not been eliminated, and we are following with interest the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on reductions in their strategic offensive nuclear arsenals. It is essential that the process be widened to include other nuclear-weapon States as well and eventually lead to the complete elimination of these weapons of extinction. An immediate and comprehensive ban on nuclear testing meanwhile remains one of the highest priorities of disarmament, and Sri Lanka is one of over 40 States which have taken action to convene an amendment conference to convert the 1963 partial test-ban

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Treaty into one that is comprehensive. That would also help to enhance the credibility of the nuclear-non-proliferation régime on the eve of the Review Conference.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Sri Lanka firmly maintains that this single multilateral negotiating forum should not delay the commencement of substantive negotiations on all issues relating to nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of the arms race in outer space. We urge the Conference to conclude its work on a comprehensive and global convention banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Sri Lanka welcomes the initiative announced by the United States President, Mr. George Bush, to destroy all chemical weapons within a decade. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has the same desire to be rid of these barbaric weapons. That augurs well for all humanity.

Finally, let me briefly refer to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The General Assembly has by a consensus decision called for the convening of the conference on the Indian Ocean in 1990 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to fulfil the objectives contained in the Declaration and considered by the littoral and hinterland States at their meeting in 1979. The Heads of State of the non-aligned countries at their ninth summit conference, in Belgrade, called for the full and active participation in the Conference by the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Ocean, whose co-operation is essential for the success of the Conference. We urge all States concerned to finalize preparatory work for the Conference to ensure its convening in 1990.

The agenda for this forty-fourth session covers a wide and varied diversity of items, including those of an economic, political, cultural and humanitarian character. Yet there is an intrinsic relationship between most of these items which makes difficult their consideration in complete isolation. A recurrent theme

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in our debate has been that many of our concerns require co-ordinated, global approaches that transcend national frontiers. For example, the children of the world are the hope and the future of the world. The concept of a world summit for children, endorsed by a number of world leaders, including my President, calls for global commitment and universal support. The possibilities and options open to an individual State for unilateral action are being increasingly circumscribed. All this emphasizes human interdependence.

Despite disparities in size and power, we are, all bound, therefore, to share a single planet and its resources. This requires that affairs among nations be so ordered as to ensure at least our very survival, not to speak of our development and progress. The cynical pursuit of myopic national interests through the inequitable deployment of political, military or economic muscle will negate our shared goals. Interdependence must therefore be a catalyst for co-operation on the principle of the sovereign equality of States on which our Organization is based.

Mr. BONGO (Gabon) (interpretation from French): The sessions of the General Assembly of our Organization offer Government officials such as ourselves the solemn opportunity both to give the views of our respective countries on the status of the world and to take a look at prospects for its future. I myself am particularly honoured to address the Assembly for the first time on behalf of my country, Gabon.

I should like first of all to discharge the pleasant duty of conveying to President Joseph Garba, the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, on behalf of His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, the President of Gabon, and on my own behalf, the warmest fraternal congratulations of the Gabonese people on his brilliant election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The confidence thus demonstrated shows the esteem he enjoys among us, and is a tribute to his outstanding qualities as a man well versed in international affairs and his commitment to the Special Committee against Apartheid, which he chairs. The President may rest assured that in this body the Gabonese delegation will be guided by its firm determination to make a sincere contribution to the success of our work.

It is my delegation's conviction that under the presidency of Joseph Garba the deliberations of the Assembly will proceed in the spirit of the principles and purposes of the Charter of our Organization for the achievement of a just and equitable world.

We should also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau, who are working with the President to ensure the success of our deliberations.

We take pleasure in availing ourselves of this opportunity to thank Mr. Garba's predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, and his Bureau for the invaluable work they did during the forty-third session.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, my country would like to pay a well-deserved tribute for the self-sacrifice, talent and complete dedication he has shown in carrying out his difficult tasks. By way of illustration I would mention his recent visit to southern Africa, as well as his participation in both the twenty-fifth summit of the Organization of African Unity and the ninth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement.

With the experience it has acquired from the various trials, tribulations and upheavals that have taken place since its creation, our Organization is more than ever aware of its place and its responsibilities with regard to the destiny of mankind. Each of us must become aware of the need for all Members to take part in world decisions in this body, for without a doubt the United Nations remains, the centre for the harmonizing of the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends.

The signing of the American-Soviet agreement of 8 December 1987 on the dismantling of intermediate-range nuclear missiles; the conclusions of the Belgrade summit last September, and the determination then restated by the non-aligned countries to work towards the building of a better world; the very recent American and Soviet proposals for the elimination of chemical weapons; the tireless activities of the United Nations in these spheres - all have given rise to a climate of détente and confidence truly propitious for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts.

The same applies to Afghanistan, and Gabon hopes that, following the Geneva agreements, as well as the withdrawal of foreign troops, an international and national consensus might emerge to enable the Afghan people to express its legitimate aspirations and devote its resources to the rebuilding of its country without external interference of any kind.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

As regards Cambodia, we take pleasure in noting with interest the role played by the ASEAN countries at the Jakarta meetings, and the first peace initiative of France, which has led to the creation of three so-called monitoring, safeguard and refugee committees, as well as to the establishment of an ad hoc committee. The mission of inquiry of the Secretary-General in Cambodia, as well as the establishment of machinery for international monitoring, are not only a useful tool but also and above all a prerequisite for a return to peace in that country.

Concerning the Korean peninsula, my country has always worked for peaceful unification in a framework of sincere joint efforts that take into account the will of the Korean people as a whole, a necessary prerequisite for the genuine representation of that country in our Organization.

Taking advantage of the overall climate of détente, the parties to the Iran-Iraq conflict have agreed to negotiate in Geneva on the basis of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We can only welcome this, while exhorting the two parties to commit themselves to doing their utmost to help the Secretary-General in the full implementation of that resolution. That is how they can show their true willingness to achieve peace.

As regards the Middle East crisis, my country has always held the view that its settlement requires the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Arab occupied territories, de jure recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and free exercise by the latter of its right to self-determination, and its right to have its own State with internationally recognized borders. Gabon, then, fully subscribes to the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

I commend here the excellent relations Palestine has had with my country, which were manifested in the opening in 1986, in Libreville, of Palestinian diplomatic representation.

We cannot talk about the situation in the Middle East without dealing with the painful problem of Lebanon because above and beyond the ordeal suffered by its people for more than 15 years, it is Lebanon's survival, that should concern us today.

Gabon, therefore welcomes the resumption of the work of the Tripartite Committee of the Arab League on Lebanon, which should form part of overall broad-based diplomatic action, and supports its efforts to find a lasting solution to this real human tragedy.

As regards the situation in Central America, Gabon hails the conclusion of the Esquipulas II and Tela agreements, which pave the way for the return of peace to that region. It also welcomes the Security Council's firm support for these agreements, which should facilitate the achievement of the objectives set forth in the plan.

I could not conclude this part of my statement without touching on the conflicts that beset our dear continent of Africa.

As regards the Chad-Libya border dispute, the Heads of State and Government, at the twenty-fifth summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), renewed the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee, which has been chaired by my country since 1977.

I take pleasure in emphasizing in this connection that the recent conclusion in Algiers of the framework agreement on the settlement of the Chad-Libya border dispute is the logical culmination of the various initiatives of the Ad Hoc Committee and its Chairman. At the twenty-fourth summit of the OAU His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo proposed that pride of place be given, as a necessary

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prerequisite for peace, to the establishment of a climate of confidence between the two countries and the dynamics of dialogue, bringing the two parties together, which would be very significant.

The Angolan issue, also, was dealt with by Heads of State of the African subregion, including the President of Gabon, and they reaffirmed their support for the plan for peace and reconciliation in Angola formulated in the Gbadolite declarations.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

In international terms, Gabon would like to express its satisfaction to those countries that have provided military observers and international officials, and to the United Nations for all its technical assistance for the verification mission in Angola.

As regards Namibia, my country welcomes the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of that territory. Furthermore, we express full appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts within the framework of Security Council resolutions 629 (1989) and 632 (1989) and urge the South African authorities to co-operate with the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in their implementation.

Finally, we are grateful to the Security Council for its vigilance, shown recently in resolution 640 (1989), whereby it requires that all parties concerned, especially South Africa, comply, among other things, with the provisions of resolution 435 (1978).

The process of Namibia's accession to international sovereignty - long overdue - is today irreversible. The desperate manoeuvres at intimidation of the civilian population and the attacks against the leaders of the South West Africa People's Organization - all plots hatched by a minority of proponents with a backward-looking, anachronistic vision of history - cannot stop or delay its implementation.

The situation in Namibia is not the only source of tension in southern Africa. Apartheid, which has become a crime against humanity, is also a considerable source of tension. That is why, now more than ever before, and taking into account current political developments - the results of the sustained action of forces for change within South Africa and of external pressure - Gabon demands that the state of emergency be ended and that all political prisoners, including in particular Nelson Mandela, be released. Furthermore, we ask those who still

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support that régime to face the facts and to help in the total eradication of that shameful system.

I could not conclude my statement on the political situation in Africa without referring to the burning question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. Gabon reaffirms its solidarity with the fraternal people of Comoros and reiterates its determination to continue its efforts to have the Comorian island of Mayotte returned to its homeland.

I come now to international economic issues, which various parties have met to discuss. Among other issues, I want to mention the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund, which met in Washington on 31 March 1989 and at which Gabon presided, and the last summit of the seven most industrialized countries held quite recently in Paris.

If we have seen a slight improvement in 1988 and 1989, as compared with previous years, we are bound to note that the developing countries have not really benefited from it. The trend of negative net transfers from our countries to the industrialized world and the international financial institutions, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the increase in international interest rates and a reduction in the gross domestic product of our various countries are the best illustration of this.

As regards the delicate problem of debt, which in 1988, according to the estimates of the World Bank, had reached the outrageous sum of \$1,245 billion for all the developing countries taken together, including \$230 billion for African countries alone, it is well known that the current cost of servicing this, by absorbing a growing proportion of export and budgetary income, is undermining adjustment efforts and is a major obstacle to the development prospects of our countries. In spite of the rescheduling agreed to by creditors, our countries have not yet been able to achieve an overall improvement in the financial balance.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The African countries in particular, with the assistance of international financial institutions, have even set up programmes of structural adjustment in order to cope with their serious indebtedness. The Gabonese Government, for its part, has, since 1986, established an adjustment programme with the objective, on one hand, of remedying the medium-term imbalances, both internal and external, and, on the other hand, of reducing the vulnerability of our countries to fluctuations in the price of oil.

We must admit that these efforts have not yielded all the desired results. Therefore, taking into account the reasons for these distortions, the African countries have advocated, within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), collective steps with a view to tailoring structural adjustment programmes to the specific characteristics of the countries concerned. This approach is in accordance with the general guidelines suggested in the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), submitted last July at the fiftieth session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, which adopted it, and by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. Gabon requests that the General Assembly, in turn, adopt the AAF-SAP and hopes that the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the Group of 24, will do likewise.

Furthermore, my country notes with interest the American initiative - the so-called Brady Plan - and the announcement, by President François Mitterrand in Dakar, of the intention to write off the public debt of 35 African countries. Even though Gabon and other medium-income countries have not benefited from this last measure, these are initiatives that we hope will lead to additional resources, and they are a real cause for satisfaction. In any case, they demonstrate the emergence of solidarity between North and South. Gabon, for its part, hopes that

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provisions to reduce the volume of trade debt and alleviate the cost of servicing it will be adopted. In this spirit, my country urges the creditor community to be impartial by establishing greater equity in the treatment of debt.

I should like to take this opportunity to salute the Canadian Government for its recent initiative in writing off the debt of medium-income African countries. By and large, the economies of the developing countries will not show real growth so long as the prices of raw materials are not at a level that takes into account the movement in those of manufactured goods and the sluggishness of international markets.

The international détente which we all agree should be emphasized and the development efforts agreed on for my country are aimed at achieving a better life for mankind in a sound environment.

As regards the environment, the perils of the modern world - such as industrial pollution of the air, the warming trend in the planet, the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, and the dumping and storing of waste of all types, to name only a few - call for world-wide attention.

In the face of what might seem to be a brake on progress, my country has adopted measures that should alleviate the repercussions on its people. I am thinking particularly of the establishment, in the Ministry of the Environment and the Protection of Nature, of a national anti-pollution centre and the establishment of a policy on the recycling and treatment of waste produced by our country and programmes to improve and preserve living resources through the reafforestation of specific areas. It is in this spirit that, in international terms, my country welcomes the recent decision of the World Bank to include the idea of protection of the environment in the development projects that it finances. We also support the convening, in 1992, of a United Nations conference on the environment and

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

development, described as a development which will help to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs.

Over and above the fears caused by degradation or deterioration of the environment scourges such as the problem of drugs are no less serious in undermining our societies. Although confined, so far, to certain regions, the spectre of this calamity haunts the rest of the world. That situation led my country to convene, in June 1989 its first national seminar on the drug problem, and the recommendations to be adopted will include the setting up of an interministerial committee to combat drugs, the development of a toxicology laboratory in Libreville for regional use, and the introduction of legislation on the use of, and trafficking in, narcotic drugs, adapted to the requirements of the penal code and the public-health code.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

These recommendations, which are similar to those enunciated by the President of the United States, and to those contained in the Secretary-General's plan, will we hope, help to stamp out this scourge of our times.

Among all the ills that afflict our world today, AIDS is the most mind-boggling. Its lightning-like progression, as well as the devastation it wreaks, are staggering.

Our countries, whose health infrastructures still have to be improved upon, are particularly concerned over this threat and we are following with the greatest of interest the efforts made by researchers the world over to find a cure. Gabon, thanks to its facilities for advanced medical research at the international centre in Franceville, recently organized a symposium on AIDS. We are firmly determined to continue, through this machinery, to make our contribution to the campaign against this terrible illness, and hope to see an intensification and diversification of exchanges with similar facilities in the rest of the world.

The developing countries, committed as we are, along with international financial institutions, to programmes of structural adjustment, cannot overlook the effects of those programmes on the poorest strata of our society, especially the risk of social upheaval, which is bound to threaten international peace and détente.

Thus, after the Bamako Initiative, the proposals made by the United Nations Children's Fund for "adjustment with a human face" - the only way our countries can hope to begin developing - were welcomed by us.

While efforts made in recent years for international détente are worthy of praise, it seems nevertheless necessary to call the attention of our Assembly to the fact that its gradual establishment has not yet led to significant changes in international relations.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Our times demand that détente not be thought of as immobility, or as a breathing spell for the great Powers. To the contrary, by its underlying dynamism détente should serve the cause of world peace.

Our common destiny requires that we work towards this together in order to achieve one of the major objectives of our Organization, to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

More than ever it is time to act with determination in order to achieve this end. Our Organization has so many commitments to meet, that only this prospect will allow for the achievement of the ideal of peace, which is the basis of all of Gabon's policies.

Peace, justice and harmony in Africa and in the rest of the world: that is the message that my country wished, through me, from this lofty rostrum, to address to this Assembly.

Mr. AL-NUAMI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. This election reflects the deep appreciation of the international community for the constructive role played by your country, Nigeria, in Africa as well as in respect of other international issues. It is also a token of esteem for your diplomatic experience.

I am pleased to extend sincere thanks to your predecessor, the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, for his performance as President of the last session.

I also seize this opportunity to reiterate the Government's confidence in the Secretary-General, and our appreciation for his efforts in resolving international problems and conflicts.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab  
Emirates)

September the first marked the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War - a war that devastated the structures and resources of many countries and took a toll of millions of dead or wounded.

This was the incentive that moved the founding fathers who framed the United Nations Charter to create the mechanisms of the Organization and a code of international behaviour that would, if adhered to and respected, prevent the outbreak of armed conflicts and wars. Indeed, the United Nations Charter prohibits the resort to war and the use of force, except in the case of self-defence. The founding fathers envisioned the creation of a new international order based on peace and security, and the achievement of the goal of universal equality and justice.

The era of the United Nations has been characterized by an absence of world wars; hence humanity has been saved from the scourge of global destruction. However, this has not prevented the eruption of numerous wars and conflicts in the third world. Let us bear in mind that so-called regional conflicts are but extensions of international conflicts. Therefore, the resolution of those original conflicts can be achieved only within the context of a positive international climate. That is why the present détente between the two super-Powers has been welcomed by all peoples of the world: it has had a positive effect on regional disputes and conflicts. We sincerely hope that no regional conflict will be excluded from that process under the pressure of certain circumstances.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

In this context, we cannot but welcome the recent agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is our firm belief that the agreements will reinforce the process of détente and enhance our faith that mankind may be spared the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

International principles and fundamental concepts, especially the right to self-determination, should not suffer as a result of those developments and the new positive international climate that augurs well for mutual understanding between the peoples of the world. The enthusiasm surrounding détente should not make us overlook the fundamental rights of peoples that are still struggling for national political and economic independence. There are also peoples combating racial discrimination, as in South Africa, and peoples that are victims of foreign military occupation, as in Palestine. International peace and understanding cannot be sustained if they promote the interests of certain parties at the expense of others; otherwise, we shall be planting the seeds of tension for future generations.

If history is any guide, we may look to the future with the hope that the present policy of détente will lead to durable entente. The attainment of such a goal will transform current attitudes and values, with progress, stability and prosperity becoming the arenas of competition, and economic and social development becoming a universal right and an established fact everywhere. We also hope that this understanding will make us confront the new dangerous problems, such as the those of pollution and narcotic drug abuse, which threaten all nations, big and small, and all individuals, rich and poor.

We meet here every year to discuss our problems and concerns. Our priorities may differ, depending on our geographic locations, economic interests and political or religious persuasions. Despite those differences, we all aspire to build a world free from threats, persecution and injustice, a world in which we appreciate

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

each other's hopes and feel each other's pain. Against this background, we should like to share with representatives the concerns of the region to which we belong.

Our region confronts old problems, such as that of Palestine and those that have ensued from it, making the Middle East a region of permanent tension. Our region also faces new problems, such as the Iran-Iraq war and its effects. More than a year has elapsed since the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq began. The United Arab Emirates was in the forefront of the countries that welcomed that important development. We considered the ceasefire to be the first step towards the settlement of all outstanding problems between the two countries and towards finding a just and peaceful settlement enshrining the legitimate rights of the two countries.

The stalemate in the negotiations - in other words, the current no peace, no war situation - does not serve the interests of either country. We all have a strong interest in the restoration of peace to the area. Therefore, we hope that a new round of direct negotiations will begin soon. While we appreciate the role and efforts of the Secretary-General, it is incumbent upon us to urge the two parties to overcome existing obstacles in order to move the peace process towards the desired goal.

The problem of Palestine is perhaps unique in modern political history. Several wars and numerous political attempts and initiatives have failed to achieve a conclusive settlement and to restore peace to that part of the world.

In reviewing the evolution of the problem, we find it shocking to note the enormous amount of resources and energies wasted in the efforts that have been made to resolve it, yet the issue, in essence, is clear. The problem lies in an attempt to deprive a people of its land and to stamp out its national identity. Every day Israel comes up with new excuses and pretexts, whose purpose is to prevent the

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Palestinian people from exercising self-determination and to deprive the region of peace and stability.

The Palestinian people, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, responded constructively and with a high degree of responsibility to the new international climate, as is evidenced by the peace initiative offered by the Palestine National Council at its meeting in Algiers in November 1988. By continuously entertaining the dream of Greater Israel and implementing the racist Zionist theory, Israel is persistently perpetuating its psychological complex and its ideology by lopsided logic. This is manifested in the election plan suggested for the West Bank and Gaza by the Prime Minister of Israel, which included the following conditions: that elections should not lead to negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the occupied territories or the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Palestinians.

The Israeli Prime Minister also insisted that the elections be held under the guns of the Israeli occupation forces. One might therefore ask: elections for whom, and what is the purpose behind them? The only logical answer is that the Israeli Government's proposal is nothing but a propaganda ploy, on the one hand, to improve Israel's image in democratic Western societies, and, on the other, to relieve Israel of the pressures of the intifadah as well as international pressures.

Throughout its long years of struggle the Palestinian people has made great sacrifices; it has made greater sacrifices in order to promote peace efforts. It would be a big mistake to assume, on the basis of recent developments, that the Palestinian people will ever surrender its land or its national identity on the altar of an unjust political settlement.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab  
Emirates)

Events clearly show that the Palestinian people is determined to continue its resistance and defend its land through its valiant intifadah, which will have completed its second year by the end of the current session. The Palestinians will continue their struggle, despite the brutal oppression of the Israeli military machine and its inhuman practices, and despite the fact that innocent children and young men and women are martyred every day on their national soil.

We believe that no settlement plan will prove viable unless it takes into consideration the right of the Palestinian people to exercise national self-determination and to establish its own independent State in Palestine. We also believe that the nature of the problem and the circumstances surrounding it make its settlement impossible outside the international context in which the problem initially originated; hence the need for an international peace conference in which all the parties should participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the five permanent members of the Security Council. All attempts that do not follow that approach and have that goal are doomed to failure.

Another problem that still persists in our region is the crisis situation in Lebanon. We welcome the results reached by the Tripartite High Arab Committee and the acceptance by the Lebanese parties of the Committee's plan of action. We still believe that a final settlement of the Lebanese civil war can ultimately be achieved through understanding and dialogue between the Lebanese themselves on the basis of brotherhood, tolerance and a sincere desire to resolve all outstanding problems, without involving foreign elements in this domestic affair.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab  
Emirates)

We appeal to all foreign Powers that have influence in Lebanon to refrain from adding difficulties to the Lebanese problem and to stop their intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs. We appeal also to the international community to help Lebanon at this critical stage to regain its full independence and restore its full sovereignty over its territory through the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), calling on Israel to withdraw its forces from south Lebanon and stop its intervention in internal Lebanese affairs.

While we look forward to the day when Namibia joins us a free and independent State and is able to exercise its role as a member of this international body after several decades of bitter struggle against the occupation by the racist régime of South Africa, we are increasingly worried about the future of the black majority in South Africa. The record indicates that the racist minority régime in South Africa is not yet ready to give up its policy of apartheid and oppression against the black majority. We hope that international pressure against the minority régime will not be relaxed. All efforts must be focused on the eradication of racism, as it has become irrefutably demonstrated that it cannot be reformed and that dealing with it can only reinforce its atrocious ideology.

The situations in Afghanistan, Cyprus and Kampuchea still require further endeavours aimed at reaching a final settlement in a manner that reflects the wishes of the peoples of those countries and the principles of the Charter. Despite relative improvement resulting from efforts undertaken to settle them, these problems still represent areas of tension.

We welcome the endeavours of the Presidents of Central America to bring to an end a decade of turbulence and strife in that region. The participation of the Secretary-General in these attempts will be a guarantee of their success.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

With respect to disarmament, important steps have been taken over the past two years, especially the agreements concluded between the two major military alliances. These agreements were the result of the détente between the two super-Powers. Of course, the road that lies ahead is still long. Quantitative reductions must be accompanied by qualitative reductions. Military tests and research must also come to a halt since they entail the waste of so many resources. We endorse the idea of transferring funds saved as a result of disarmament to development programmes, especially in the third world.

While significant progress has been made in the political sphere, developments in the field of international economic co-operation may give rise to pessimism. Following the stock market crash of 1987, world economic conditions have improved with increased trade and total output, contrary to expectations. However, world economic expansion has been asymmetrical. While the developed and the industrialized countries registered higher economic growth rates, the economies of Latin America and Africa have deteriorated, with declining growth rates. Consequently the per capita income gap between the rich and the poor countries continues to grow.

The single most formidable issue confronting the world community, as we embark on the next decade, is the resolution of the indebtedness of the least developed countries. The developing countries have been so encumbered by their debt obligations that interest payments alone to the creditors since the mid-1980s have far outstripped the total value of aid received by the developing nations. In 1988 those countries paid out \$50 billion, in interest alone, more than they received in aid. This situation has further undermined the efforts of the developing countries to pursue economic growth rate policies. Debts and interests, in simple terms of figures, underscore the imperative for debt reduction, and in this connection we

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

welcome the Brady plan as a positive development. However, the solution to the debt problem will be contingent on the degree of co-operation and shared efforts of the debtors, creditors, commercial banks, national Governments and international institutions.

The instability in the international financial system should be cause for concern to the policy makers. Persistent trade deficits in the key industrialized countries and the inconsistency in their adjustment policies have put an enormous strain on the international financial system. The reverberations felt throughout the world financial markets in the aftermath of the crash in the United States of America is testimony to that fact.

The continued volatility in exchange rates and interest rates has eroded the confidence of investors and, consequently, led to a deterioration in the world economy.

We believe that the existing international system is not adequately equipped to cope with these strains and efforts at restructuring international economic relations on the basis of justice, equality and mutual interests must therefore continue. To this end the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, which is to take place in the spring of 1990, provides an excellent opportunity for members to review the North-South dialogue and to seek agreement on principles that should guide their co-operation in the years to come. This would lay the foundation for the adoption, later in 1990, of an international development strategy that would be the basis for realistic and genuine agreement on the commitments of all nations to tackle the huge problems of poverty, development and the environment that beset our planet.

The general debate will conclude in a few days. Many statements were made and more will follow. Most of them expressed confidence in the future and reflected

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

the hopes of some and the suffering of others. What is most important is that we preserve the achievements of international co-operation. Indeed, our overriding objective should be the preservation of this international Organization, which brings us together. It is also important that by the time we meet next we should find that suffering has been transformed into hope and hopes into realities. First and foremost, this requires confidence, confidence in our abilities as human beings and confidence in each other as States.

Big projects always start with small steps. Let us march together on the road towards a world in which love, co-operation, security and prosperity reign supreme.

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 five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Yugoslavia.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): In his statement this morning, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania made a number of false, even absurd, allegations in attacks on Yugoslavia. Although these allegations as such do not deserve an answer, we will reply to his statement because it clearly showed that the real policy of Albania has not changed towards my country and towards the world.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

It is a policy of flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, a policy of instigation of citizens of Yugoslavia of Albanian nationality towards separatism and of indoctrination with nationalistic ambitions for the creation of Greater Albania. This policy is obviously aimed against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Yugoslavia. The absurd obsession of the Albanian leadership with chauvinistic aspirations towards the establishment of a Greater Albania, contrary to all norms of international law and present positive trends in Europe expressed through the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), is the root cause of activities of separatist groups which were behind the recent violent nationalistic demonstrations and disturbances in the Yugoslav socialist autonomous province of Kosovo. Various so-called Marxist-Leninist groups inspired from Albania were formed to promote this goal.

These are the real problems that burden our relations with Albania and in the Balkans. The question is: What moral right to lecture on human rights has the representative of a country known by mass violations of these rights and brutal repression of those who think differently - a country that for years has refused to accede to the appropriate international legal instruments and to accept any co-operation with the Commission on Human Rights and other international forums in this field?

At a time of strengthening of democratic processes in the world and of common endeavour to bring about a world of freedom, Albania continues to extol and glorify Stalinism and feels good about itself as the only atheist country in the world, the country that has closed down churches and mosques, prohibited religious rights and freedoms and abolished God by official decree.

Albania continues to reject the realities of the world. That was evident also in its statement today to the General Assembly, which was dissonant with the overwhelming positive assessments of international developments. It is therefore

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

not difficult to understand why a country that cannot realistically see trends in international affairs can even less assess constructively and objectively the developments in its own region and the need for co-operation and good-neighbourliness.

I submit that Albania would better serve the cause of its own people and its own international prestige if it ensured its citizens at least a fraction of the civil rights and freedoms that, together with other Yugoslav peoples, are enjoyed by Albanians in Yugoslavia. The real position of Albanians in Yugoslavia can be illustrated by the fact that they are proportionally represented in all provincial organs and equitably, on the basis of parity, in the organs and bodies of the Republic of Serbia and the Yugoslav Federation. Albanians are also equitably represented in the armed forces, foreign service, and in other major institutions of the Yugoslav system. Members of the Albanian nationality have held some of the most responsible posts in the Yugoslav leadership, among them that of President of the Assembly of Yugoslavia, President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia, which is the President of Yugoslavia - and President of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

It is in Yugoslavia that Albanians have seen their full cultural and national flowering and affirmation. Suffice it to say that the University of Pristina, with almost 50,000 students, is a unique institution in the world that teaches in the language of a national minority. Another illustration of the rights enjoyed by Albanians in Kosovo is the existence of the Academy of Sciences, radio and television programmes, and libraries with predominantly Albanian books, many of which are either unavailable or forbidden to the Albanians in Albania.

The fact is that Yugoslav republics and the province of Vojvodina grant more than \$1 million per day for the development of Kosov, where out of 1.7 million people, 80 per cent are Albanians.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

The position of Albanians in Yugoslavia has been and remains an exclusively internal question and responsibility of Yugoslavia. In the international legal sense, Yugoslavia, as a party to almost all the international conventions and agreements in this field - which is certainly not the case with Albania - has undertaken to respect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Not only has Yugoslavia abided by these rights and standards; in their implementation, it has gone much further by ensuring for Albanians in Yugoslavia constitutionally equitable participation in the political, economic and cultural life of the country as well.

To shed some light on the state of affairs in this field, let me recall that, prior to the Second World War, about 100,000 members of Yugoslav national minorities lived in Albania; today, owing to the assimilation policy of the Albanian authorities, the official Albanian data themselves register less than 5,000.

The existence of and respect for the rights of national minorities within its territory, and of Yugoslav minorities in the neighbouring countries, has been regarded by Yugoslavia as a bridge of better mutual understanding and rapprochement. Unfortunately, Yugoslavia's experience with Albania in this regard is very disappointing, since Albania has never stopped interfering in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, even though the Albanians in Yugoslavia themselves have rejected over and over again the patronizing concern and protection offered them from Albania as a cover for different designs.

In addition to what I have said, the statement of the representative of Albania contains other falsehoods. He has intentionally exaggerated the number of Albanians living in Yugoslavia to 3 million, which means that he increased it by almost 50 per cent. This is also a manifestation of Albania's nationalistic aspirations. His statement also contained the monstrous allegation that hundreds

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

of thousands of Albanians were killed and imprisoned last spring in Kosovo. Yugoslavia, however, has officially informed the international community of the measures against illegal and terrorist actions directed against constitutional order and its territorial integrity.

Yugoslavia has called for co-operation, both bilateral and multilateral, among the Balkan countries based on mutual respect and interest. It initiated the first Ministerial Meeting of all Balkan countries in Belgrade in 1988. However, Albania has continued its organized political campaigns which often escalate into overt support for and assistance to certain separatist groups, aimed at promoting Albanian territorial aspirations to certain parts of Yugoslavia and at creating the so-called Greater Albania.

This morning's statement of the representative of Albania is further evidence of Albania's persistent interference in the internal affairs of my country. It is a sovereign right of every country to take the necessary measures to protect its constitutional order, integrity and sovereignty. Yugoslavia has done it, and will continue to do so, ensuring at the same time all rights to all peoples, nationalities and national minorities living in its territory.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Haiti.

Mr. SAINT-PHARD (Haiti) (interpretation from French): In exercising the right of reply, the delegation of the Republic of Haiti wishes categorically to state how dismayed it is at the remarks made by the spokesman of the Saint Kitts and Nevis delegation with respect to the current social and political situation in Haiti.

My delegation regrets that the delegation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, despite its apparent interest, is not aware of the information provided through the international media and the press with respect to the electoral process in Haiti.

(Mr. Saint-Phard, Haiti)

In order that no one should be uninformed, in future, my delegation will be happy to read out the most important dates in a timetable published on 24 September 1989 and disseminated inter alia in Le Monde and The New York Times.

"These are the highlights of the timetable for the electoral process: first, in October 1989, implementation of the structures of the permanent electoral board - an autonomous body - the national, regional and local levels; secondly, from January to March 1990, census and registration on the electoral rolls; thirdly, in April 1990, election to local administrative councils, in three phases; fourthly, in July 1990, first round of municipal and legislative elections; on 17 October 1990, first round of presidential elections; on 11 November 1990, second round of presidential elections".

(Mr. Saint Phard, Haiti)

I hope members will forgive me for quoting Saint Paul, who said "I cease not, dearly beloved, repeating the same things, for your profit".

In the same vein, I recall the exhortation of the octogenarian Saint John to his flock:

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth". (The Holy Bible, I John, 3:18)

It is clear that Haiti will have fine elections that will please both its true friends and those who hold it in contempt. But it is less certain that those who presumably have a genuine interest will be inclined to proclaim here with equal ardour the acute and obviously more urgent social and economic needs that hold the Government and the people of Haiti hostage in their harsh grip. Ill-informed, unjustified cookie-cutter criticism cannot cause any distress in my country, which has a legitimate right to the respectful support of other countries on this Earth. The prescription of a well-thought-out package of special economic and technical assistance for my country - as repeatedly recognized by the General Assembly - is still valid.

My delegation will grant no other delegation the privilege of casting the first stone in its direction. Long after the time of Destouches, we note the wisdom and timeliness of his observation that criticism is easy, but art is difficult.

Mr. KAPLANI (Albania): We might have hoped the Yugoslav representative would deal candidly and realistically with the causes and consequences of the grave situation the Albanian population in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia is forced to endure, and would outline ways to overcome it. But he chose instead to distort reality, and went even further by fabricating slanders and accusations against Albania and the Albanians.

(Mr. Kapllani, Albania)

I would not be showing respect for the Assembly - nor would it serve the debate in general or this issue in particular - if I were to go into details about what the Yugoslav representative said, first of all because it was untrue and was intended to divert the Assembly's attention from the real situation in Kosovo and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, what the Yugoslav representative said did not contribute in any way to redressing the conditions in Kosovo and Yugoslavia. It did not offer an alternative that would bring the country out of the grave overall crisis that afflicts it.

In the general debate the head of the Albanian delegation reiterated the just and consistent stand of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which has condemned the tragic events that took place in Kosovo in spring this year and the use of violence and the imposition of martial law against a peaceful population demanding freedom and democratic rights equal to those of all the other nationalities of the Yugoslav Federation. It is neither new nor unknown that the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Albanian people have at all times stood against violence and terror wherever they occur, whether in South Africa, Namibia, the occupied Arab territories, Central America or elsewhere. They have always sided with and supported unreservedly the nations of the world, whenever they have been subjected to oppression.

Therefore, it is beyond any doubt that we should not close our eyes and pretend nothing is happening when our brothers of the same blood in Kosovo and Yugoslavia are being discriminated against, oppressed, persecuted and even killed for the sole reason that they have demanded basic democratic rights and freedoms; when they are being deprived of their autonomy; when a population of almost 3 million, which has lived for centuries on its own ancestral land and is now sharing its destiny with the other peoples of Yugoslavia, is coerced into accepting the denial of its national identity.

(Mr. Kapllani, Albania)

We listened to the Yugoslav representative describe the situation in Kosovo as a unique case of the only ethnic minority in the world that enjoys all freedoms, including the right to hold the presidency of the Federation. But however selective and bombastic the phraseology, it cannot conceal the reality of the situation in Kosovo, which gives the lie to what the Yugoslav representative said.

True enough, Kosovo is unique in that, for instance, its per capita income is one third that of Serbia; in that unemployment in the province is the highest in Yugoslavia, reaching over 35 per cent of the working-age population; in that illiteracy tops Federal figures; and in that Kosovo is rightly referred to as Yugoslavia's underdeveloped south.

It is surprising that the Albanian population in Yugoslavia is no longer referred to as a nationality but as an ethnic minority, even though it is known world-wide that it constitutes the third largest population group in the multinational Yugoslav Federation, after the Serbs and the Croations. That is proof enough of the real esteem in which they are held and of the place they are given in the Yugoslav Federation. Hence the need for major propaganda on the Albanian minority's right to occupy the office of the Federal presidency. It is no convincing argument that the Albanians enjoy all political, economic, cultural and other freedoms.

The fact of the matter is, moreover, that the argument has always been capitalized upon and used as an ethnographic declaration on the facade of the Federation, designed to hide the all-round discrimination against Albanians and their status as second-class citizens in Yugoslavia.

(Mr. Kapllani, Albania)

The Yugoslav representative tried to make us believe that the constitutional amendments recently forced on Kosovo have not had any negative effect on the democratic rights and freedoms of the Albanian people in Kosovo. If we are to believe him, they have on the contrary made the Albanians a privileged nationality in Yugoslavia. That remark is ridiculous, to say the least. If we are to believe what the Yugoslav representative said, how can he explain that the immediate effect of those amendments is that Albanian officials holding various posts and responsibilities are being removed daily in their tens and hundreds and being replaced by Serbs?

According to Yugoslav sources, the number of students enrolled at Pristina University has now decreased by 45 per cent, whereas the number of pupils of Serbian nationality entering secondary schools has increased by 240 per cent. Over 300 Albanian intellectuals have been subjected to isolation and all the consequences it entails. That infamous institution used in the Yugoslavia of today against the Albanians reminds one of the Dark Ages in Europe and the notorious phenomenon of the desaparecidos.

It is worth recalling that the League of Yugoslav Writers and Artists has described as "inhuman and anti-democratic" all the measures taken against the Albanian students and intellectuals. Let us remind the Yugoslav representative that since the adoption of these amendments, which he calls "democratic changes", Kosovo and the Albanians have been witnessing pogroms such as Europe has not seen in a long time, and had almost forgotten. Suffice it to mention that according to Yugoslav sources 500,000 Albanians have been forced to go through the filter of the police and judicial organs in Yugoslavia. That is happening not in South Africa but in the middle of our old continent of Europe at the end of the twentieth century.

(Mr. Kapilani, Albania)

The Yugoslav representative boasted that Yugoslavia has signed various important international documents. Yet the world judges a country's behaviour not by what it says, but by what it does. Deeds speak louder than words. It is all the worse for Yugoslavia, which has signed so many international documents, including the Helsinki Act, to be acting contrary to the letter and spirit of those documents.

The Yugoslav representative would have done better to speak of the real situation in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, since this audience undoubtedly would very much like to listen to an explanation or hear a hopeful word about how the situation is going to be reversed. But regrettably he chose to attack, in self-defence, by suddenly "discovering" the violation of human rights and religious beliefs and discrimination against the Slav minority in Albania. The aim of this propaganda tirade, which resembles a storm in a teacup, is slanderous and malicious. But it is also poor and ill-calculated from the technical point of view, for the situation in Kosovo and Yugoslavia is not mended by accusing and maligning another country, in this case Albania, or by distracting the attention of public opinion from the Yugoslav reality, bitter as it is.

(Mr. Kapllani, Albania)

Worse still, the slanders and accusations on the alleged violation of the rights of the Slav minority in Albania which Yugoslavia has not hesitated to level against other neighbouring countries as well, are not only not in accordance with reality, but are also far from the constructive spirit, realism and wisdom so much needed.

The accusation regarding alleged Albanian interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs is a worn-out and thoroughly exhausted argument which is completely groundless and can convince neither the world nor Yugoslav public opinion itself. Albania has publicly and unequivocally stated that it has no territorial claims on Yugoslavia, that it does not advocate border rectifications, and that it stands for the stability of the Yugoslav Federation. It is clear to us that in one way or another the destabilization of Yugoslavia would unfavourably affect Albania. History has shown that whatever has befallen either country has not spared the other. Not infrequently we have been obliged to face the storms of history together. It is therefore clear that the so-called interference of Albania in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia is being used to stop Albania from speaking out, to make us remain silent while Albanians are being oppressed and persecuted, even run over by tanks, in the midst of Europe.

Thus the accusation of so-called interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs is designed as camouflage of Kosovo's grave situation, which has aroused the deep concern, not only of the Albanian people, but of the entire world, including the sound Yugoslav public opinion, which sees and has called the current Yugoslav Constitution "the bloodiest Constitution of Europe", the Constitution of tanks. This gives cause for deep and genuine concern, and the truth is that such concern and preoccupation have been expressed by international public opinion, various mass press and information media, governmental and parliamentary organs, numerous

(Mr. Kapllani, Albania)

international institutions and renowned political personalities. Our stand towards the events in Kosovo in Yugoslavia is clear. History, facts and reality cannot be changed either by violence or by propaganda.

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt the speaker, but the 10-minute period is over; may I therefore ask him to be kind enough to conclude his statement.

Mr. KAPLLANI (Albania): Yes, I will do so.

As Yugoslavia's next door neighbour, we wish to maintain good-neighbourly relations with them. However, if the Yugoslav side shows irresistible zeal in presenting white as black and vice versa, we shall not hesitate to call things by their proper name, the more so when ours are good intentions. The motives we proceed from are democratic and humane, the redressing of the unfavourable status of the Albanians in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, stabilization of the situation in Yugoslavia itself and a genuine improvement in the relations between our two countries.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Yugoslavia, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): It must be clear to everybody in this Hall that this is a second, even worse, interference in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia now presented by the representative of Albania, compared to what his Foreign Minister said this morning. I think it is clear now that Albania claims the right to interfere directly, flagrantly, to attack the constitutional arrangements of Yugoslavia, to try to incite certain nationalistic groups in Kosovo against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Yugoslavia.

I think this is a euphoric attack on a neighbouring country, euphoric interference in our constitutional order and arrangements, really calling for change. It is an unheard of demand here. This is what really burdens Yugoslav-Albanian relations. The representative of Albania is inspiring separatist

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

forces, which are in the minority among the Albanians in Kosovo, to continue their action against the constitutional order of my country. That is what Yugoslavia will never accept, and the Albanian leadership must understand that.

The representative of Albania spoke of the economic situation in Kosovo. I should like to say that of course Kosovo and many other southern parts of Yugoslavia, we admit, are underdeveloped. It is historically underdeveloped, but I claim that the people of Albanian origin in Kosovo have a much higher standard of living than those in Albania.

What is really the problem and what bothers the Albanians is the constitutional changes in Yugoslavia that have taken place recently, in which all the Yugoslav republics, including the Republic of Serbia, have become equal in their jurisdiction over their territory. That is what has happened with the changes. But of course, those changes have also set a limit on the activities of certain separatist forces in Kosovo which were inspired by the Albanian chauvinist circles in Tirana. That is why they are crying out against the Yugoslav constitutional changes.

Nothing has happened. The representative of Albania anticipated what I am going to say, that really the rights of those of Albanian nationality - and I am saying "nationality", not "minority" - in Kosovo have not been limited in any way. What was established by this autonomous position of Kosovo, what was established by those constitutional changes recently, was that Serbia, as a republic of which Kosovo is a part, an autonomous province, has the right to stop certain interference from outside and to stop pressure against the Serbs and Montenegrans to leave their homeland, to leave their fireside, under pressure from the separatist forces and move to Serbia, so that Kosovo would become ethnically clear for the designs that originate in Tirana as part of the "Greater Albania".

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Concerning this "Greater Albania", I will cite only a few things. Albania cannot be unaware that maps of "Greater Albania" are being circulated, showing large portions of Yugoslavia included in them, but Albania has never distanced itself from them, although it claims to have no territorial aspirations. In his speech at the Eighth Congress of the Albanian Workers Party, the late Enver Hoxha said that Albanians in Yugoslavia had been "wrested away from their mother country". In accordance with that political line, the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Albania's independence in November 1987 took place in a nationalistic frenzy of lamentation over "crippled" Albania, the glorification of struggle for the defence of the territorial integrity of the country and "liberation of Kosovo and other regions". What is this, if not aggressive claims against the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia? This is the essence of the problem. One wonders how Yugoslavia can expect to have good relations and co-operation with a neighbour who has pretensions to its territories and actively works to destabilize it.

Yugoslavia has always tried to assure Albania of their good relations. We have made sacrifices even when they were attacking us some years ago. We have made sacrifices: we have used a piece of our territory to build a hydro-electric dam on the Albanian side. We have built a railway, connecting Titograd to Albanian territory in order to enable Albania to have a connection with the rest of the country.

All of this has proved, I am sorry to say, to be wrong because there are these attacks, attacks against the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. That is how Albania responds to our proffered hand of friendship and co-operation.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Albania, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. KAPLLANI (Albania): I consider it inappropriate to speak at length on the second statement made by the representative of Yugoslavia in exercise of the right of reply and to take the time of the Assembly at this late hour, because the representative of Yugoslavia actually said nothing new and useful to be listened to and appreciated by my delegation and the Assembly.

It is evident that having no argument to defend an unjust cause which cannot be defended, and going further in the irrational course of discussion, he wove another spider's web of non-existent and absurd slanders and accusations which the Albanian delegation refutes and considers unworthy of being dealt with.

For certain, members of the Assembly have noticed the fact that the representative of Yugoslavia, within a short interval of time, from his first right of reply to the second, demonstrated an inconceivable escalation of slander against Albania. This shows a total deviation from the road of reason and cool logic and from the conduct of a constructive and civilized debate.

The problem the Albanian delegation raised in the general debate in the Assembly is a big and significant one. It has to do with the state of affairs and the destiny of the third largest segment of the population in Yugoslavia. It is associated with the rights and democratic freedoms of nations and peoples and with their political, economic and cultural emancipation, which are becoming important tendencies in our time, whereas the representative of Yugoslavia chose to ignore this issue and indulge in vulgarities and non-existent things, judging that by so doing he would pass unscathed in the Assembly and continue with a hitherto dead-end policy.

The meeting rose at 7.45 p.m.