



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/44/PV.19
11 October 1989

ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 4 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

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

- Address by Mr. Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Hannibalsson (Iceland)
Mr. Wong (Singapore)
Mr. Fall (Senegal)
Mr. Ake (Côte d'Ivoire)
Mr. Kafé (Comoros)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. MOBUTU SESE SEKO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAIRE

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

Mr. Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Zaire, His Excellency Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President MOBUTU SESE SEKO (interpretation from French): On 4 October 1973 - in other words, 16 years ago to the day - I addressed the General Assembly for the first time. Since then, many of the situations that were dealt with at that time have undergone profound change. As I take the floor for the second time from this rostrum, my very first words will be to tell you how very glad I am to be able to share with you my reflections on some of the contemporary problems that will shape the future of humankind.

Let me first, Mr. President, congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am gratified indeed at the confidence and the honour that all the States Members of our Organization have accorded, not only to your person and your country, but indeed to Africa, which is legitimately proud of this. I also congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, the head of the Argentine delegation, for the masterful way he presided over the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I wish to pay a special tribute also to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose competence and skill have enabled

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

our Organization to regain its credibility. Therein lies proof of the fact that the countries of the southern hemisphere are proving their ability to contribute effectively to the taking of decisions that guide the affairs of the world.

The Republic of Zaire will always recall the important role played, immediately after its independence, by the United Nations in restoring peace and safeguarding our national unity, jeopardized by the spectre of internationalization of the Congo crisis, which we remember as a tragic event.

In exactly 11 years, the lights will dim and go out on the twentieth century. This is something more than the simple passage from one century to another; it is the crossing of a threshold between two millennia - a rare phenomenon in the life of any person. To have the illusion of having gone through a thousand years is a privilege not given to all generations.

But, if the ways in which God moves are mysterious and if no one knows what the years ahead hold in store for us, one thing none the less remains certain: a few nations around the world, representing 683 million inhabitants out of the 6 billion of the total population, are jealously monopolizing the technology, progress and development to whose expansion all peoples the world over have made a contribution. This is why the message I carry to this Assembly from the heart of Africa is first and foremost a message of peace and an appeal for the solidarity of peoples, together with an invitation to safeguard our environment, so that the twenty-first century, the horizon of which we are now trying to scan, may become for us a century of progress and of shared happiness.

But first and foremost, I crave your indulgence as I return briefly to the consideration of certain subjects that I broached some 16 years ago, notably those involving peace and the international economic order. You will recall that, back

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

then, I denounced the perpetuation of the colonial situation and of apartheid on African soil, and I recalled that before the hurricane of history, ready or not, ripe or not, a fruit will fall.

Thus, we have seen the Portuguese compelled to abandon their African colonies and the British turn over the reins of power to the black majority in the former Southern Rhodesia. Apartheid continues to flout the conscience of all mankind, but Africa and the world have managed in the meantime to mobilize with a view to dismantling it, and the time is not far off when blacks, whites, mestizos and Indians will be able to enjoy the same rights and the same freedoms within one and the same democratic State.

On the strength of that conviction, and notwithstanding the predictable reactions that certain initiatives would give rise to, I agreed to receive in my own country, first, former President Pieter Botha, in October 1988, and then, last August, his successor, Frederik de Klerk. Those two encounters enabled me to make an appeal before my interlocutors for the cause of those whose freedom and dignity are flouted and to stress the urgency of doing away with apartheid. Beyond that, the Ad Hoc Committee on Apartheid of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) displayed open-mindedness and good will in acknowledging recently, at Harare, and under certain conditions, the principle of constructive dialogue with the Pretoria régime.

As regards Namibia, the last colonial bastion on the African continent, it is resolutely moving towards independence thanks to the determination of the nationalists of Namibia, led by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and thanks to the relentless pressure brought to bear by the international community on South Africa.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

The Assembly will recall that, as a way of bearing witness to its solidarity with Egypt, a part of whose territory was occupied by Israel, the Republic of Zaire, represented by myself personally, announced from this lofty rostrum that it was breaking diplomatic relations with the Hebrew State. The restitution of the Sinai to Egypt having occurred in the interim, in 1982, in conformity with the Camp David Accords, it made sense for us properly to restore our diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

What this means is that this position makes it possible for the Republic of Zaire to remind our Israeli friends that if they feel entitled to have secure and recognized boundaries they must in exchange recognize the same rights for the Palestinians reduced to wandering for more than 40 years. Now Palestinians and Israelis can no longer ignore one another. They must sit down together and make peace on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

Since then, on the Asian continent Viet Nam has managed to achieve its own unification; the Korean people is pursuing the path of dialogue to decide on its destiny, while the Cambodian people has placed its hope in the dialogue, difficult to be sure, that has begun among its various leaders in Paris; the breakdown of the first round must not discourage us.

In the space of 16 years many other hotbeds of tension have sprung up across Africa: Chad, Western Sahara, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Mali and, more recently, Senegal and Mauritania.

Our continent needs no armed conflict. It is peace and development to which it deeply aspires. That is why we welcome the fact that, thanks to the advantages of dialogue and the concerted approach to things, certain of these hotbeds of tension have been defused while others are in the process of being defused, which further testifies to the maturity of Africans and their ability to settle their disputes peacefully.

Further away from ourselves, speaking in this case about the Afghan problem, we encourage the unilateral or concerted initiatives already in train. In so far as the Iran-Iraq conflict is concerned, we welcome the cease-fire that has come about, and in this connection we praise the discreet and effective steps taken by the Secretary-General.

Likewise we hope that Lebanon, once freed from foreign influence, will again find the path to national reconciliation and build upon its rich tradition as a

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

people that is industrious and loves peace and freedom. Along these lines we support the work the Tripartite Committee of the Arab League has been doing.

In connection with international economic relations between poor and rich countries alike, when I first addressed the Assembly I asked the conscience of the world to ask itself in turn whether it was not the poor countries which in the final analysis served to enrich the wealthy ones.

Today I feel that the answer is clear. No one, indeed, can have any doubt about the reality of the phenomenon of negative capital transfers to the detriment of the poor countries through, among other things, machinery set up for the repayment of debt.

We are also concerned about protecting the environment; the Republic of Zaire had the honour to initiate the World Charter for Nature. That has not, however, kept certain industrialized countries from unscrupulously transforming Africa into a dumping ground for toxic wastes, described on our continent as deadly waste.

This brief retrospective indicates that over the course of the last 16 years, notwithstanding the cropping up of certain hotbeds of tension, the international climate has improved significantly. However, there is the risk of all this being compromised as long as certain crucial problems continue to jeopardize world equilibrium. We are here speaking about issues of development, peace and the environment.

In our day and age, mankind has the resources and wherewithal to ensure its development world-wide, but a number of countries, particularly those of Africa, lag behind considerably in economic and social terms, notwithstanding their enormous potential in natural resources.

Two major phenomena, closely linked, stymie all efforts at growth and development of our economies: the crushing burden of external debt and the

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

relentless worsening of terms of trade. These phenomena are familiar to all of us, and I would stress above all the question of our external debt.

So far as we Africans are concerned, external debt is strangling our economies. By contrast, so far as our creditors are concerned, the \$230 billion Africa owes them is scarcely a drop in the bucket compared to what the New York Stock Exchange alone lost in the October 1987 financial crash.

In Zaire, for instance, before the 1987 restructuring, debt servicing was devouring some 26 per cent of our export income and some 50 per cent of the State budget. It was no longer possible to finance social expenditures even at a minimal level or to make indispensable investments in infrastructure.

Notwithstanding the restructuring, indebtedness continues to grow because of the machinery of accumulative interest, compelling us to resort to still more borrowing.

None the less we appreciate the gestures of solidarity made before the Toronto Summit by Canada, and after it by France, the United States and a number of other developed countries.

Recently Belgium, in turn, took an innovative approach to the matter, not only by cancelling public debts involving African countries and absorbing a third of the commercial debt guaranteed notably vis-à-vis Zaire, but also by staggering and restructuring two thirds of that commercial debt over a period of 25 years with a 14-year period of grace.

Moreover, interest charges on the two remaining thirds will be converted into a fund based on local currency aimed at financing development projects initiated by the beneficiary countries.

Still addressing the subject of debt, I pay tribute also to the People's Republic of China, which since 1973 has discreetly, for the benefit of its African partners including Zaire, enacted measures consisting in a lightening of the debt

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

burden by converting credits into local currencies for the purpose of financing on-the-scene bilateral co-operation projects.

These isolated measures aimed at lightening the debt burden are generous to be sure, but they will not be as great as desired because of the harmful effect of the deterioration in the terms of trade on our economies, which will reduce our capacity to repay debt and to finance our development.

We feel that the African continent must be able to enter the next century with dignity. Innovative international policies must be devised to reduce foreign debt, restore confidence among partners and strengthen co-operation for development. This is a question of ethics and justice.

What we have always asked of our partners - without failing to acknowledge the need to repay debt - especially in the case of the least developed countries, is that moratoriums be arranged, that repayment be extended over more realistic periods, and that interest rates be renegotiated, taking into account our actual ability to pay.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

However, now that the last decade of the twentieth century is at hand, is it not time to come up with more innovative solutions to the debt problem? Guided by the model of co-operation already set up by some Member States, the international community should urge Africa's creditors to accept the principle of a grace period of at least 10 years and to agree to the repayment of all debt in local currencies. The resources thereby freed would be channelled into national development funds, which would in turn be earmarked for financing public and private investment projects likely to further the growth of our economies.

In so doing, our creditors - that is, States, commercial banks and multinational corporations - instead of passively awaiting repayment of their debts, would participate on a basis of solidarity in restoring growth to our economies. Thus, and only thus, will it be possible to preserve and strengthen the climate of détente and mutual trust in international relations between the wealthy countries and our developing countries.

I take this opportunity to recall that the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which was adopted at the conclusion of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to that question, included two complementary obligations. First, the African countries have the obligation to implement economic reforms and, secondly, the international community undertakes the commitment to support Africa's efforts. Some time prior to the adoption of that Programme a number of African countries, including the Republic of Zaire, had begun economic-policy reforms designed to foster rapid recovery and to lay the groundwork for sustained development. That determination is all the more courageous and praiseworthy in that the effects of those measures have generally spawned social tension and political instability.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

Notwithstanding the sacrifices made, the results of those structural adjustment measures have proved meagre, ephemeral or merely nonexistent. Indeed, our situation has grown worse, as was confirmed by the Secretary-General's report - submitted to the forty-third session of the General Assembly - on the mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme.

For those reasons I make this appeal to the conscience of the international community: beginning in 1990, and in the light of the approach I have just sketched out, let us devise a genuine plan for international solidarity in favour of African development, a plan similar to the Marshall Plan that was launched for the reconstruction of a Europe ravaged and devastated by the Second World War.

It is within that framework that I am proposing that in the decade 1990 to 1999 the African countries pay all their debts in local currency and that the new resources thus freed be devoted solely to attaining the goal of economic growth with the co-operation of the competent international organs.

Taking advantage of reforms already under way, the lessons learned from past experience, and the effects of recent actions, Africa will be sufficiently prepared to cope with domestic constraints, to participate actively as a genuine economic partner in the progress and development of mankind, and thus to occupy an honourable place in the world of the twenty-first century.

However, African economic development presupposes a climate of peace, freedom and security. Africa feels that it is an integral part of any process designed to achieve world peace. Thus, each State of our continent, to the extent of its possibilities, feels the duty to work towards the maintenance of peace, both home and abroad.

In this connection I have noted with satisfaction - as has for that matter the international community as a whole - the progress achieved in recent years in the field of disarmament and the reduction of armed conflicts, particularly through the

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

promotion of the détente set in train by the Washington agreements concluded between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

However, that climate, which is basically a product of the lessening of tension between the two super-Powers, must also generate the results the international community expects in the field of development. As the Assembly is aware, from the moment it attained independence my country, Zaire, has been obliged to overcome civil wars and wars of secession, from the ashes of which a State and a nation have been forged. For almost 24 years the people of Zaire have been living in peace and national harmony. Moved by its commitment to Africa in the service of peace, the Republic of Zaire has, together with its neighbours Rwanda and Burundi, established a zone of economic solidarity that has rapidly become a zone of security and stability in the sub-continent.

In the name of maintaining peace, my country has twice lent its support to Chad, first at the request of the Organization of African Unity and then in response to the appeal of the legal Government of Chad, in order to defend that country's territorial integrity. Tirelessly pursuing the ideal of peace, the Republic of Zaire and Zambia, its neighbour to the south-east, have, after seven years of negotiations, just signed a treaty delimiting a portion of their common frontier that had been undefined and a source of contention since 1894.

Of the 9,116 kilometres of border it shares with nine neighbouring States, Zaire shares more than 2,600 kilometres with Angola. That indicates our interest in seeing peace restored to that fraternal country that has been ravaged by 14 years of war. That is why I unhesitatingly agreed to undertake the mission of mediation entrusted to me by my colleagues the Heads of State of central and southern Africa, who met on 16 May this year at Luanda. Within that context I

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

managed - not without difficulty - to organize on 22 June 1989 the Gbadolite summit meeting in which 20 African countries participated, including 18 Heads of State and two highly placed heads of delegation.

On that day Africa witnessed the laying of the foundation on which peace in Angola will be built, namely, the historic handshake between President Dos Santos of Angola and Mr. Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA; the proclamation of a cease-fire; and the establishment of the principle of negotiations leading to national reconciliation.

For my part, I believe that the Angolans remain the sole masters of the peace process that has been initiated. In whatever way they work together, directly or indirectly, it is up to the Angolans alone to deal with the political and military questions that affect their country.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

The international community has noted that if respect for the cease-fire under the Gbadolite Declaration has proved to be ephemeral, for essentially psychological reasons compounded by interference from abroad, our Angolan brothers none the less have not broken off dialogue but indeed have gathered four successive times with the mediator.

I remain convinced that the unshakeable determination to restore peace clearly expressed by the Angolan people will prove more than equal to current difficulties. The full implementation of the Brazzaville and New York quadripartite accords and the successful implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia, together with the advent of peace and justice in southern Africa, depend in great part on national reconciliation in Angola. I invite the international community to do all it can to ensure that the efforts of Africa and of Angola towards peace are crowned with success. In our capacity as mediator we remain more than ever determined to provide our Angolan brothers with all possible assistance and to make available to them our own modest experience.

Peace, security and economic and social development call for the advent of an environment in which people can freely develop and evolve in tranquillity, with their rights fully guaranteed. In Africa we are familiar with the prominence accorded to fundamental freedoms ever since the era of traditional societies, vestiges of which still survive today notwithstanding the determination of the colonial Powers to annihilate them. Our ancestors were devoted to the idea of freedom, in the name of which they fiercely resisted everywhere all attempts at conquest from outside.

The question now for us Africans is to ascertain whether the political structures we are setting up do indeed foster the full unfolding of freedom. This is not because that is what the West wants us to do - because democracy is not the

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

monopoly of Western societies - but because we continually seek political and economic strategies likely to promote our development.

To be sure, we do not maintain that modern African societies no longer have anything to accomplish for democracy or for more democracy. On the contrary, we are saying that some of our political structures constitute a real democratic framework attuned to the African and likely to achieve social integration in our countries.

In Zaire we are endeavouring to bring our own particular touches to bear on formulating and upholding human rights. It is with this concern in mind that we have adhered to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ratified the two international Covenants on civil and political rights and on economic and social rights. My country is one of the 40 States Members of the Organization to have ratified the Optional Protocol on Civil and Political Rights. It also immediately acceded to the African Human Rights Charter. Finally, my Government includes a department entrusted with the protection of the rights and freedoms of our citizens, a department endowed with sweeping powers to accomplish its mission. The machinery thus set up illustrates our political determination to promote the rights and freedoms of Zairian citizens and the rights of foreigners who have chosen to live within our country.

Experience, though recent, has already shown that this department is playing an essential role in providing information to citizens on their rights and freedoms; it is intervening and redressing acts involving damage done when individuals have seen their rights unjustly violated and have exhausted all other machinery of recourse; and it oversees respect for procedures, conditions and proper treatment with regard to detainees.

Zaire welcomes the tribute paid to it by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in February this year in omitting its name, on the basis of what had

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

been achieved in this field, from the list of countries considered as not respecting human rights. Of course, we recognize that we have not yet reached the ideal situation, but the fact that all countries of the world, even the most advanced, do not escape criticism when it comes to the violation of individual rights adequately shows that one cannot, on the basis of an administrative or police slip-up noted here or there, confuse a State of law with States that have made repression their system of government.

I should like to conclude my statement by dealing with questions involving the environment. I recall with emotion my own youth closely intertwined with the majesty of our rivers and the purity of our streams. I also recall our virgin and luxuriant forests from which every morning one heard the call of birds. It is with deep sadness that we witness today the accelerated deterioration of our natural environment under the impact of multiple and repeated aggression. The indignation and protest triggered the world over by the export of toxic wastes have shown a growing awareness within the international community of the major risks for humanity posed by the deterioration of the quality of life, of which atmospheric pollution is one of the most obvious manifestations. Hence, Zaire urgently calls for the swift devising of rigorous international norms vital to the preservation of our planet and the future of mankind.

At the present stage, my country's contribution towards safeguarding the natural environment is expressed by its active support for the complete implementation of the World Charter for Nature.

With 47 per cent of the tropical African forests within its borders the Republic of Zaire has brought 5 per cent of its national territory under national protection. Our goal is to bring that figure up to 16 per cent - some 376,200 square kilometres. Within this area we are protecting rare species

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

threatened by extinction. This includes the white rhinoceros, the number of which increased from 11 in 1980 to 25 in 1989. We are also ensuring the protection of the okapis; a partial study over 10,000 square kilometres has shown a density of 1 okapi for every two square kilometres. As for elephants, the forests and savannahs of Zaire contain a population of nearly 200,000 elephants out of a total of 700,000 across all of Africa. Here, I pay tribute to all those countries that have taken measures aimed at discouraging trade in ivory, the major cause of the extermination of elephants. Our concern also goes to gorillas living in the mountains we share with our neighbour, Rwanda, and for which the late regretted but remembered Mrs. Fossey gave her life.

Members will agree with me that all progress that compromises ecological balance destroys man himself as he seeks to achieve peace and a life of tranquillity and full development.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

I should like to conclude by expressing the hope that the climate of détente which marks international relations today will become much stronger and, in the last decade of the twentieth century, bring us more peace and more solidarity among peoples.

It seems to me to be vital that the international community adopt a disinterested approach of genuine solidarity towards Africa, with regard to which many prejudices are held, tending to condemn us to underdevelopment.

Therefore, with regard to Africa's indebtedness, I have proposed a new approach, that of converting all our debts into local currency and setting up development funds to finance priority investments. That would mean creating the conditions to enable Africa to take charge of its own development and to enter the twenty-first century with greater dignity.

It goes without saying that, as I have already pointed out, for Africa world peace is essential. That is why I have emphasized my country's contribution to the efforts to restore peace in Africa, and especially in Angola.

Similarly, it must be recognized that human rights and freedoms are among the preconditions for the development of any human community. As regards ourselves, I have described the institutional machinery that we have devised and established to promote and protect those rights and freedoms.

Finally, I have recalled the international community's duty with regard to nature, whose preservation is indispensable for the survival of the human race, and I have described Zaire's contribution in that regard.

The principles on which our Organization is based and to which we have all freely subscribed are noble. They reflect our common concern for peace and freedom and for the dignity and improved well-being of all the peoples of the world.

(President Mobutu Sese Seko)

Respect for those objects of our concern is the best guarantee of a serene future for mankind.

May the twenty-first century fulfil our hopes of solidarity, justice, peace and progress.

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

Mr. Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. HANNIBALSSON (Iceland): I join previous speakers in congratulating our President on his election to preside over the current session of the General Assembly. It testifies to the high esteem in which he is held by the General Assembly and is also an indication of the respect felt for the great country, Nigeria, of which he is a worthy representative.

As inhabitants of an island separated from its neighbours by a vast ocean, Icelanders may have had a keener appreciation than the peoples of most nations of the extent to which distance has come to count less and less as a factor in world affairs. The forging of ever-closer links within the world community has been apparent at many levels - technological, economic and environmental. As a consequence, there is now a growing awareness among the various peoples of the world of a universality of interest and of a common destiny of humankind. Some time ago somebody coined the phrase, "global village", to describe that trend. Someone from a seafaring nation would perhaps put it differently: we are all in the same boat.

* Mr. Sallah (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

The globalization of issues that used to be the prerogative of individual States has not simply been a matter of historical inevitability. Deliberate political action has also had a role to play. The far-reaching changes that are under way in East-West relations, as evidenced most recently in bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, have shown us how effective political leadership can truly make a difference.

We are entering a new era in international relations, which seems to offer realistic prospects for a fundamental transformation of the political, ideological and military confrontation which has so characterized the post-war era. The successful management of the present transition period will require the political will and imagination to map out new avenues in international relations, paying due regard to the risks and uncertainties involved.

Efforts to overcome suspicion and lack of trust in relations between East and West have helped establish an environment in which it might now prove possible to channel resources from costly military competition to more creative international endeavours. The easing of tensions between East and West will thus no doubt redound to the benefit of North-South relations also.

I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his valuable contribution to solving serious international and regional conflicts, thereby strengthening the role and image of the United Nations.

Strengthening the United Nations implies reinforcement of the rule of law in international relations. The growing awareness of the world community of the rule of law in international affairs is particularly welcome to an unarmed nation, which fought its battle for independence without resort to violence.

The changing world environment is opening up unprecedented opportunities for the United Nations. With the cold war mentality on the wane, the world

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Organization can now for the first time entertain realistic hopes of translating into reality the vision contained in the United Nations Charter. At the same time, the Organization itself has emerged as a more effective agent of change.

We who are alive now can be seen as merely temporary guests on this planet, Earth. While we are here we are under an obligation to preserve the common heritage of our forebears and to secure the living conditions of our descendants, the generations that come after us.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Iceland is a country which is overwhelmingly dependent for its existence upon the exploitation of the resources of the seas. For Icelanders the safeguarding of the environment is a matter of life or death, no less.

We are grateful for the initiatives which are apparent on the international front in so many spheres: on the protection of the ozone layer, on long-range transboundary pollution and, most recently, on the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. Two years ago we welcomed in this body the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by my Nordic friend Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Prime Minister of Norway. The report analysed the state of the environment and made recommendations for future action. This year we started the preparatory work for a United Nations conference on environment and development, to be held in 1992.

These initiatives respond to a need which is becoming ever more apparent to the world community. In the industrialized world we are looking into the murky backyard of the civilization we have created - be it on land, at sea or in the atmosphere. To all of us, and particularly with reference to the developing world, it is becoming apparent that without reducing poverty, and at the same time protecting the environment, economic growth will be denied us in the future.

We are seeing the effects of global warming, the greenhouse effect, destruction of tropical rain forests, deforestation, acid rain, desertification and depletion of the ozone layer.

The inhabitants of the earth's continents need to be reminded that the oceans cover more than 70 per cent of the earth's surface. They are and will remain in the future a basic source of life on earth. For my people, the Icelandic nation, preservation of the natural resources of the seas will, therefore, remain

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

paramount. As we say in Icelandic:* "Foourland vort halft er hafio" - or, the sea is half of our fatherland.

The living resources of the sea can be considered as the world's food reserves. The increasing pollution of the seas, not least that caused by radiation and by the industrialized nations' practice of using the open seas as a dumping ground for their industrial wastes, is therefore a major cause for alarm, not only for coastal States but for the whole world community.

We can view these developments against the threat of the even greater, indeed catastrophic, damage which could be caused by the weapons of mass destruction. We need only recall the devastation which resulted from the use of these weapons at the close of the Second World War.

In its greed and short-sightedness the ruling species of this earth, which has given itself the honourable title of "homo sapiens", seems not only to be prepared to disregard the consequences of its behaviour on its own habitat, but to be actually engaged in total warfare against nature - even ready to destroy it completely.

I was struck by the sombre assessment in the Brundtland report which refers to the 6 million hectares of productive dryland which is turned into worthless desert each year, and the destruction of more than 11 million hectares of forests annually. Over three decades this destruction would extend to land masses the size of, respectively, Saudi Arabia and India. The report warns us of the environmental trends which threaten radically to alter the planet and endanger many species upon it, including the human race.

* Please note text.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Are we helpless in the face of these assaults on our globe? I say "no" - and the initiatives I referred to earlier can be seen to have their basis in a recognition of the legal obligation to work together to protect our planet. These obligations can be traced to the principles of the United Nations Charter which govern our work in this body. The general principles of the Charter entail firm commitments for mankind and for Governments not to pollute our planet, nor ruthlessly to exploit our natural resources. The Charter establishes a duty of a moral and ethical character. Our past, present and future activities constitute an integral ecological whole. The Bible reminds us that as we sow, so shall we reap.

The General Assembly has adopted resolutions setting out some of the relevant principles; one of these is the 1982 resolution adopting the World Charter for Nature. We have seen endorsed in this body the principles of the Stockholm Declaration adopted at the close of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. I also note article 55 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention of 1949.

In 1982 the world community adopted the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which contains, in its part XII, important principles on the protection of the marine environment. The Brundtland Commission concluded that

"the most significant initial action that nations can take in the interests of the oceans' threatened life-support system is to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention". (A/42/427, annex, chapter 10, para. 55)

The World Charter for Nature includes among its 24 principles the obligation to respect nature and not to compromise the genetic viability of earth. Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions provides that care be taken in warfare to protect the natural environment against widespread, long-term and irreparable damage. A group of legal experts reporting to the Brundtland Commission set out a

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

series of legal principles asserting, for example, the fundamental right of all human beings to an environment adequate for their health and well-being.

But it is in the Law of the Sea Convention that we can seek inspiration for our further efforts in the field of environmental protection. It is a matter of pride for my nation and for many of the peoples of the developing world that we were ahead of our time when we started our long-drawn-out struggle for this constitution of the marine environment. In the Convention we can find the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment through co-operation between States on a global and regional basis. We find the limitations on dumping and pollution of the atmosphere particularly relevant in this context.

The Government of Iceland is of the view that existing legal instruments for the protection of the environment should be strengthened. There exist various legal instruments that apply to specific fields of protection of the environment. But new instruments are needed, for example with regard to climatic change. New fields should be explored. We welcome, for instance, the initiative of Malta proposing the inclusion of a new item in the Assembly's agenda, on environmental protection of extraterritorial space.

We are, however, also of the view that we can take further steps by drawing from the experience in drafting the Law of the Sea Convention. A new concise legal instrument should be prepared, setting out the principles with regard to the rights and obligations of States generally applicable to all fields of protection of the environment. These principles would relate to the right of all human beings to a safe environment and the obligations to conserve natural resources and maintain biological diversity and to provide for utilization of natural resources on the basis of the principle of optimum sustainable yield. They would call for standard-setting, for environmental assessment and for obligatory co-operation between States in the protection of the environment.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

It would be appropriate for the General Assembly itself to signify its commitment to this field by taking the steps necessary for the preparation of such a new legal instrument, either under its own auspices or in connection with the preparatory work for the 1992 conference on environment and development.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

The well-known Norwegian expert in international law Jens Evensen - a judge at the International Court of Justice - has reminded us that "Good planets are hard to find". Let us realize and accept in all humility that we have to live in peace, not only among ourselves but also with mother Earth.

The changes towards more economic and political freedom in Central and Eastern Europe are both more rapid and more radical than could have been expected previously. As evidenced by developments, particularly in Poland and Hungary, countries in Central and Eastern Europe now seem to have a realistic prospect of being able to abandon a political and economic system, forced upon them in the wake of the Second World War, that was alien to their culture and heritage and, as history has proved, utterly detrimental to their economic progress.

These developments are a major factor in establishing a basis for improvements in East-West relations. But it must be recognized that internal change in Eastern Europe does not take place in isolation; the irreversibility of internal change may to a substantial degree depend upon external responses.

Present developments in Central and Eastern Europe need, therefore, to be encouraged. They should be looked upon as an unprecedented opportunity to transform East-West relations, to build a new foundation for a lasting peace in Europe that gives more weight to political than to military arrangements.

As the use of force in East-West relations has become more remote than at any other time since the Second World War, arms control and disarmament have moved to the centre stage of attention. Arms control, however, should not be regarded as a substitute for genuine progress across the whole range of issues on the East-West agenda, which includes, certainly, the human dimension. The balanced results of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which ended in January, have helped to place the security-related aspects of that agenda in a proper context.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Yet there can be no question but that progress on arms control has a positive impact far beyond the area of security proper. The early conclusion of the current CSCE-sponsored Vienna negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, on the one hand, and confidence and security-building measures, on the other, holds particular promise. An agreement to eliminate current imbalances in conventional weaponry would remove one of the underlying causes of East-West tension and facilitate the transformation of political relations in Europe.

Prospects for substantial and meaningful disarmament have also been boosted significantly by the declared willingness of the United States and the Soviet Union to cease production, and do away with their stockpiles, of chemical weapons. We welcome, in this context, the proposals made by President Bush to this Assembly only a week ago and the positive Soviet response.

The reduction of the massive arsenals of nuclear weapons is no less a test case for improvements in East-West relations than are negotiations on conventional weaponry and confidence-building in Europe. If the past provides us with any guidance, an era of co-operation is not likely to be realized if the competition in nuclear weapons cannot be managed.

The Treaty to eliminate intermediate nuclear forces on land has dramatically demonstrated how substantial cuts in nuclear weapons can serve the purpose of enhancing security. It is in this spirit that we welcome recent success in the removal of obstacles to a strategic arms-reduction treaty. The progress made towards the ratification of the Threshold Test-Ban Treaty and towards a treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions is a necessary step towards the goal of a comprehensive test ban.

The Icelandic Government has expressed its view that, once the current negotiations in Europe have yielded satisfactory results, confidence-building and arms control should be extended to the seas. The seas have not received much

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

attention in disarmament negotiations so far, although several treaties apply to the maritime domain. The arms race at sea clearly deserves more attention in order that a safer and more secure ocean environment may be created.

We therefore welcome the growing recognition that improved stability, predictability and confidence are called for at sea no less than on land. There is also a growing understanding that confidence-building at sea must be compatible with the principle of freedom of navigation and must take into account the asymmetrical dependence of different States upon the seas and secure ocean lines of communication.

The strategic arms talks offer the prospect of a substantial reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, including those at sea. In our view, the large number of non-strategic naval nuclear weapons should be taken into consideration as a subject in a confidence-building and disarmament process that includes sea areas.

Security and the environment are becoming increasingly interrelated. The contamination of the ocean environment must be taken seriously by nations that depend on the living resources of the seas. Repeated Soviet nuclear-submarine accidents remind us of the potentially disastrous consequences of such accidents, particularly if they were to occur in important fishing waters such as those around my country. As an initial step, we therefore suggest that international guidelines for the safety of seaborne reactors should be worked out by the International Atomic Energy Agency. These guidelines should apply to all vessels.

I have argued that the problems of the environment are emerging as the dominant issue facing this Organization in the decades ahead. But, even as we take on new tasks and responsibilities, there will remain a need for the good offices of the United Nations in bringing regional conflicts to a peaceful solution.

The situation in the Middle East and a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict - continues to be of primary concern to the international community. A

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

comprehensive, just and lasting solution will be found only if the parties concerned refrain from acts of violence and thus show their sincere will to attain the goal of a lasting peace.

Israel's plan to hold elections in the occupied territories is an important step in the process of seeking a solution to the conflict. In particular, we welcome and support the 10-point plan recently presented to this Assembly by President Mubarak of Egypt for the implementation of such elections. Egypt has ignited hope for a dialogue that might lift the Israeli-Palestinian conflict off the streets and onto the negotiating table.

We welcome the constructive efforts of the Arab League to reach a cease-fire in Lebanon. A lasting solution guaranteeing that country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity must include the withdrawal of all foreign troops. The taking of hostages and abductions constitute intolerable violations of international humanitarian law.

One of the most important achievements of the United Nations is the extensive codification and progressive development of human rights. The United Nations has successfully increased the number and scope of international agreements. Its latest achievement in this field is the drafting of a convention on the rights of the child, to be considered at this session of the General Assembly.

In spite of this active role of the United Nations, the frequency and magnitude of human-rights violations are deplorable. It is obvious that setting standards is not enough; we must, through international action, make Governments and individuals abide by these standards, and we must increase pressure on all those who violate human rights.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

One of the means to that end is to strengthen the implementation measures and enforcement capabilities of the United Nations. Another key element is knowledge. Every individual on Earth must be informed of his fundamental human rights. We must always bear in mind that it follows from the Charter of the United Nations that a State cannot claim that the promotion and protection of human rights constitute an intervention in the internal affairs of a State.

I referred earlier to the increasing awareness of the world community of the role of the rule of law in the affairs of nations. In this connection the Government of Iceland welcomes the inclusion in the agenda of this session of the item on a United Nations decade of international law, following the Hague Declaration of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We note the incorporation in that Declaration of references to many of the principles of the rule of law which, as I have indicated today, should govern relations between States.

More than 1,000 years ago the Icelandic Althing - the oldest parliamentary assembly in the world - adopted the principle of the rule of law to guide the relations between the various interests in the newly established republic. This principle - Legibus gentes sunt moderandae - was inscribed on the gavel used for many years in this noble Assembly. We are reassured that in the era of co-operation that we are now entering, the world community will let its actions be guided by this universal principle of the rule of law.

Mr. WONG (Singapore): First of all, let me congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Your unique and illustrious background as soldier, political leader, scholar and author, and your wide experience in multilateral diplomacy will no doubt provide you with the particular sensitivity and skills required to guide us through the complex issues of the United Nations agenda. My delegation has absolute confidence in your abilities. We pledge our fullest co-operation.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Ronald Spiers on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services. I am confident that he will bring to his responsibilities the highest degree of professionalism, which was the hallmark of his predecessor. May I also express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo for carrying out his duties so diligently and admirably during the last session.

Last year was an exceptionally good year for the United Nations. For the international community, long used to the unending eruption of wars, disputes and conflicts, never had the promise of peace been so close to realization. Agreements were reached to end the war in Afghanistan and to establish a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. In December, agreement was also reached to usher in Namibia's transition to independence. The United Nations peace-keeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their contribution to peace-keeping. Multilateral diplomacy was patently yielding results. The prestige of the United Nations had never been greater.

This year, in 1989, we are a little less euphoric. We are sobered by the realities and the difficulties of the resolution of conflicts among nations. While some progress has been achieved on several fronts, we are keenly aware of the problems that still stand in the way of peace. Eight months after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the fighting and the killings have not abated. The talks to end the Iran-Iraq conflict have stalled. We are alarmed at the worsening situation in Lebanon and the stalemate, if not retrogression, in spite of earlier progress, in the resolution of the question of Palestine. We await the long overdue birth of independence in Namibia with the keenest interest.

Singapore feels privileged to be able to contribute to the achievement of this goal through our participation in the United Nations Transition Assistance

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Group police contingent. We are also honoured that the leader of our police contingent, Superintendent Lee Kok Leong, has been appointed chief electoral officer to oversee elections in Namibia. But we are disturbed at the attempts by South Africa to circumvent the implementation of some key aspects of the United Nations plan for Namibian independence as contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). We must continue our vigilance to ensure that nothing will derail the transition to independence and prevent the full implementation of free and fair elections in November. After Namibia, the international community should help to hasten the pace of fundamental change in South Africa to end the abhorrent and evil apartheid system.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in summing up the problems of peace-making in his report on the work of the Organization, said:

"I am all too conscious how thorny is often the path leading to a just and lasting settlement and how hard is the resistance encountered." (A/44/1, p. 12)

I fully agree with him. If there is a lesson to be learned in all this, it is that there is no quick fix to peace.

When a major Power comes to the conclusion that military power cannot be used to achieve political objectives and that dialogue with a global rival is more fruitful than confrontation, it ushers in a more auspicious international climate. But we have clearly learned this year that even when the major Powers are prepared to settle their conflicts a necessary but insufficient condition for the attainment of peace has been met. The key that unlocks the door to peace in regional conflicts is often in the hands of the parties directly involved. All that is needed is one inflexible and intransigent party to block the peace process.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

We are also aware that, even as we have to work harder on the problems of international and regional conflicts, a new generation of problems compelling urgent attention has come on our agenda - problems such as drugs, the environment, refugees and debt. Those problems recognize no borders and, if left unattended, could complicate and threaten the wider and long-term security of the international community and our search for peace.

Among the nations in South-East Asia, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a whole has done well. We have progressed because our national stability has allowed each of us to concentrate our attention on our internal political, social and economic development. This in turn contributes to ASEAN's resilience and cohesion. We had hoped that the same peaceful and stabilizing conditions would be achieved in Indo-China, but, alas, the Cambodian conflict remains an intractable problem. It is now 11 years since the Cambodian issue was first brought before the Security Council in January 1979 after Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia on Christmas Day in 1978.

For 10 years the international community spoke through the United Nations resolutions, calling upon Viet Nam to end its occupation of Cambodia and to accept a comprehensive political settlement which would bring lasting peace to the region. Such a comprehensive political settlement would provide, among other things, for the withdrawal of foreign forces under effective international supervision and control, the creation of an interim administrative authority, the promotion of national reconciliation under Prince Sihanouk and the right of the Cambodian people to choose their own leaders free from outside interference.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Our efforts at the United Nations were not without impact. Initially, Viet Nam denied that its troops had invaded Cambodia. Later, when this untruth was exposed, Viet Nam arrogantly declared that the situation in Cambodia was irreversible. But continued United Nations pressure and international isolation, denying Viet Nam valuable aid and investment, forced it to concede for the first time, in 1986, that it was prepared to reach a political solution. What Viet Nam had not taken into account was the strength and resilience of the Cambodian nationalist resistance. The high cost of foreign occupation brought its economy to the brink of bankruptcy. Now that the Soviet Union is keen to reduce its burdens abroad, the option of a continued Vietnamese presence in Cambodia cannot be ensured. Viet Nam has reached a point where it has to reconsider its strategy.

On 5 April this year Viet Nam dramatically announced to the world its intention to withdraw all its troops from Cambodia by the end of September. In recent days, we have seen photographs and newspaper reports of Vietnamese soldiers departing in military trucks. It is certainly a major media event, but what are we as responsible Governments to make of this announced withdrawal? Are we to conclude that the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia ended on 26 September as Viet Nam claims it did? Are we to conclude that the problems of Cambodia are now all resolved? Is there no further need for the United Nations to continue to debate and discuss the issue of Cambodia?

The most significant point to note about the announced withdrawal is that, first, it is a unilateral withdrawal undertaken without a comprehensive political settlement in place. The withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops has not been effectively verified. We have no way of knowing if the withdrawal is genuine and total. There was only a handful of media journalists, several observers from some non-governmental organizations and representatives of the few countries that have

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

diplomatic relations with the Hun Sen régime who had gone to Phnom Penh to observe the Vietnamese departure. This motley group could not honestly verify that there are now no more Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. Indeed, the United Nations technical fact-finding mission dispatched on agreement by the Paris Conference on Cambodia reported that even in the best of circumstances it would be difficult to verify satisfactorily the exit of the Vietnamese troops. The terrain and the poor infrastructure and transportation system in Cambodia makes systematic supervision and control very difficult.

Secondly, this is the eighth time that the Vietnamese have claimed to have withdrawn their forces from Cambodia. In the past, as in July 1982, May 1983, June 1984, April 1985 and May 1986, Viet Nam had said that it was withdrawing its troops from Cambodia, but each time we learned that those withdrawals amounted to no more than a rotation of troops. We are therefore justified in being sceptical about the present withdrawal. Our scepticism is supported by an article in the 27 September issue of the Bangkok Post which reported that some East European sources had told its correspondent, Mr. Jacques Bekaart, that some Vietnamese troops had been left behind in Cambodia.

Thirdly, there still remains the vital question of Vietnamese soldiers who are staying behind as militia of the Hun Sen régime and as settlers. Viet Nam has not contested the existence of Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia. The argument is over the numbers. Viet Nam claims that there are 80,000 Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk says there are about 1.3 million. Some Western diplomats in the region estimate the figure to be between 300,000 and 400,000. The issue of the number of settlers is important as this determines who has a right to vote in the internationally supervised free and fair elections that come with a comprehensive settlement, and therefore the right to choose the Government of Cambodia.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

In any case, Viet Nam has not entirely relinquished its right to intervene again in the affairs of Cambodia. In several statements made since the 5 April announcement of Viet Nam's intention to withdraw by the end of September, Viet Nam has asserted its right to send its troops, or whatever other assistance, to Phnom Penh if it feels that the survival of its puppet régime is threatened by resistance guerillas.

There are therefore considerable doubts whether the Vietnamese have completely withdrawn from Cambodia. However, even if we could document that Viet Nam had completely withdrawn its forces, I submit that the United Nations should still continue to debate and discuss the Cambodian issue. Some may argue that the United Nations role should be limited to discussing violations of the United Nations Charter and that United Nations interest in Cambodia should cease when foreign intervention there ends. To understand the fallacy of this argument, let me cite an analogy: if the South Africans decided to withdraw their forces from Namibia but insisted on leaving in place the Windhoek régime as the exclusive Government of Namibia, without giving the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) the right to compete in fairly held elections, we would immediately denounce South Africa and declare that the Windhoek régime had no legitimate right to rule Namibia since it was installed by foreign occupation forces.

That is precisely what Viet Nam is trying to do in Cambodia. After withdrawing most of its forces, it continues to insist that the Hun Sen régime, which was put in place by the foreign occupation forces, should continue to rule Cambodia. That is why the Paris Conference failed. The three Cambodian parties led by Prince Sihanouk, which are recognized as the legitimate representatives of the Cambodian people by the Assembly, by the United Nations, were willing to share power with Mr. Hun Sen in an interim quadripartite coalition Government until free,

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

fair and democratic elections were held under United Nations supervision. They were prepared to allow the Cambodian people to determine who should rule them, demonstrating their commitment to the most fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter: that a people's right to self-determination should never be diminished.

Viet Nam and Mr. Hun Sen opposed this, declaring that Mr. Hun Sen should enjoy a monopoly, or near-monopoly, of power in Phnom Penh. They knew that by doing so they would give the nationalist forces led by Prince Sihanouk no choice but to launch a military struggle to secure their legitimate right to self-determination. Both Viet Nam and Mr. Hun Sen want to trigger off this civil war. We are sad that the Cambodian people, who have now suffered for almost 20 years, continue to live in agony. But it is Viet Nam and Mr. Hun Sen who are responsible for this state of affairs, and they should be condemned for it.*

After raising the hopes of the Cambodian people through our principled and moral stand over the past 10 years, we cannot disappoint them by abandoning them at this crucial hour when they are so near to securing real liberation. The United Nations can and should help the Cambodian people by insisting that there should be a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem. The international community must insist that it can never accept anything less than this. Such a comprehensive political settlement must give the Cambodian people the right to determine their own future in free, fair and democratic elections under international supervision. Only this will end the civil war and allow the Cambodian people to breathe freely again.

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

The exercise of self-determination in Cambodia must be based on national reconciliation of all Cambodian parties. All parties must have a stake in the future of Cambodia. To attempt to exclude any party as a pre-condition for national reconciliation is unrealistic and irresponsible. It is tantamount to inciting the prolongation of conflict and bloodshed. That is why Prince Sihanouk has wisely and realistically called for the formation of an interim quadripartite Government of all four Cambodian parties. This interim quadripartite Government will have the responsibility of organizing free and fair elections. Since all parties will be involved in organizing the elections, all will be bound by the results.

No matter what we, as individual countries, may think about any Cambodian party, only the Cambodian people have the moral and political right to determine who should or should not rule Cambodia. Nobody else has that right. In exercising their right to self-determination through free and fair elections, the Cambodian people will finally be able to pass their verdict and judgement on the Khmer Rouge. The international community has the obligation to help create conditions that will enable the Cambodians to exercise freely their political choices, and to respect their choice, whatever it may be. The international community should recognize that the Cambodian people will have the wisdom to choose wisely.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Let me restate the central issues of the Cambodian problem. First, the total withdrawal of all Vietnamese troops must be verified by the United Nations, as only the United Nations can provide an effective international supervisory, monitoring and control mechanism. Secondly, the Cambodian people must have the opportunity to exercise the right of self-determination, which is a basic right of all peoples under the United Nations Charter. Thirdly, none of the Khmer parties should be denied the opportunity to stand for election under the comprehensive political settlement, as only the Cambodian people have the right to decide who should govern them; the exclusion of any party should not be made a pre-condition for a settlement agreement.

My country, Singapore, does not bear any historical animosity against Viet Nam. But why have Singapore and our Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) partners championed the cause of Cambodia so energetically in the past decade? We have done so because Viet Nam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia have threatened the peace and stability of South-East Asia. We have done so because Viet Nam's action, if not repudiated, would set a very unfortunate precedent. Viet Nam must not be allowed to get away with only partially solving the problem. If it succeeded, it would have demonstrated that aggression pays. It would have shown to others that it is possible for one country to invade another country with impunity, set up a client régime, and after a long enough interval walk away from the mess it created, leave a resistance war raging and go back to business-as-usual with the rest of the world. That would create a dangerous precedent. For all peace-loving States of the international community, we must not accept this dangerous precedent. It would put our security in jeopardy if this should become acceptable international behaviour.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

The Cambodian issue has been a success story of the United Nations. This may sound paradoxical but it demonstrates that international moral pressure does work. Through the United Nations resolutions adopted year after year, with increasing support, we have forced Viet Nam to change its position over time. We have come this far. Viet Nam is taking the first step towards the resolution of the Cambodian question by thinning out its troops in the field. But the problem is far from being resolved. We at the United Nations must continue our moral suasion to convince Viet Nam that it has the responsibility to settle the Cambodian question comprehensively in the interest of a just and lasting peace for the Cambodians and in the interest of regional security and stability. When Viet Nam contributes to the comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian issue, peace will return to Indo-China. When there is peace in Indo-China, the international community will help in its reconstruction. Viet Nam will finally be able to concentrate on its own internal economic and social development and reap the fruits of prosperity.

Mr. FALL (Senegal) (interpretation from French): The Senegalese delegation, through me, wishes to convey to you, Sir, its warm congratulations on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is a well-deserved tribute to both you and your great country, Nigeria, which is a friend of my country. Your personal qualities as a seasoned politician and a distinguished diplomat, and the wealth of experience you have gained in the the United Nations system certainly guarantee that our work will proceed successfully.

May I here reiterate our deep gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, who so skilfully directed the debates at last year's session of the General Assembly, and to reiterate our unreserved support for Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for the talent and devotion he

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

has evinced in his tireless activities in the service of peace, development and the strengthening of the role of the world Organization.

Last year, from this very rostrum, distinguished people expressed their joy at the new era of dialogue and understanding which had been engendered by improved relations between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is very gratifying to note that this atmosphere of détente and co-operation is continuing and even growing, as indicated by the winding down, and the considerable progress made towards the settlement, of a number of regional conflicts whose constant deterioration had for long been a feature of international relations.

The start made, on 1 April 1989, in the implementation of the plan for Namibia's independence; the signature and implementation of the tripartite agreements by Angola, Cuba and South Africa; the initiatives taken by Africa to promote national reconciliation in Angola; the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement, by which Libya and Chad have finally embarked on the course of the final settlement of what remains of their dispute; the opportunities provided by the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the matter of Western Sahara: all these are events which allow us to hope for peace in these parts of the African continent.

Similarly, in Central America, the process underlying the so-called Arias plan has been confirmed and strengthened as a result of the Tela agreements of 7 August 1989.

More recently, the Paris International Conference on Cambodia suspended its work on a note of hope. We congratulate France and Indonesia, the co-Chairmen of that important Conference, and we urge the Khmer parties and those directly concerned to seize this historic opportunity to ensure that their professed desire

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

for peace and national conciliation in Cambodia is translated into fact. The current session of the General Assembly provides an unequalled opportunity for the international community to work to promote conditions which will favour the resumption and conclusion of the Paris Conference, taking duly into account the very realistic and constructive proposals made by the Democratic Kampuchean resistance.

Finally, the persistent action of the Secretary-General in Cyprus, despite the persistence of real difficulties there, should also be encouraged.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

We welcome this significant progress which is the result of the political will displayed by the parties directly concerned, as well as of the contribution of other protagonists on the international scene, first and foremost the great Powers.

Our Organization's role, which has been visibly strengthened over recent years, has made it possible for it to take a more active part in maintaining this positive and dynamic process and, in particular, in carrying out its main responsibility of maintaining international peace and security through operations such as those under way in Lebanon, Iran and Iraq, Angola and Namibia. We must safeguard that credibility at all cost. In this connection, current events in Namibia, where the United Nations is engaged in the broadest peace-keeping operation ever undertaken, will test the maturity of this world body.

Another indication of the strengthened role of the United Nations is the activity of the Security Council. Working energetically in an atmosphere of calm, cordiality and openness, the Security Council has effectively reacted whenever the international situation so required. Senegal has the honour and privilege of being involved, for the second time, in the work of that important body as a non-permanent member, whose term of office of two years will conclude at the end of this year.

Discreetly but also resolutely, my country has endeavoured to make a positive, consistent contribution to the activities of the Council in a particularly eventful period. We all share the responsibility to safeguard the current public image of our Council, an institution which has been made more effective by a propitious political climate in which, together with the other members, the non-aligned countries play a notable role through their constructive and concerted approach and their determination and solidarity in the defence of just causes.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

This optimistic picture of the world situation and the role of our Organization should not lead us to overlook the fact that a great deal still remains to be done: in Palestine and in Lebanon people are still suffering from foreign occupation; apartheid continues to make millions of innocent victims in South Africa; although the guns have fallen silent in the case of Iran and Iraq, peace is slow in coming; in Afghanistan the Geneva Agreements still have to be made a reality; and other hotbeds of tension have emerged.

The deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian Arab territories and the dangerous impasse in efforts to find a political solution are the two main features of the Middle East question. Senegal deeply regrets the lack of any appropriate reaction by Israel to the courageous initiatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Just as every time it has been a matter of having law triumph over force and supporting the valiant struggles of peoples against oppression and domination, my country was among the first to recognize the new State of Palestine. It is fitting that I should reiterate here the glowing tribute the Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, and the Government and people of Senegal paid to Chairman Yasser Arafat, the National Palestine Council and the fraternal people of Palestine.

Given the impasse created by the lack of any positive response from the Israeli Government to the constructive position adopted by the Palestinian side, the 10-point proposal put forward by President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak constitutes a powerful initiative which could well pave the way to a process of fruitful dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

At this time, everything must be done to induce Israel to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 on the protection of civilians in time of war, in order to safeguard the protection of civilian populations in the occupied Palestinian territories against the repression of the Israeli occupation forces, which are striving in vain to stifle the intifadah.

The situation in the Gulf remains a source of concern. More than a year after the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, there is still no peace. Senegal appeals to both parties to demonstrate more flexibility in the negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

As current Chairman of the Summit of Francophone States - a family to which Lebanon belongs - Senegal makes a similar appeal to all those who are involved in the Lebanese tragedy for the peace plan initiated on behalf of the League of Arab States by the Kings of Saudi Arabia and Morocco and the Head of State of Algeria to receive their full support and for peace to be restored in that war-torn country.

In addition to existing conflicts, there are tense situations which may well explode and join the list of numerous problems facing our world. It is strange indeed that such situations should persist, given the impressive means provided to Member States by the United Nations Charter for the prevention and settlement of conflicts.

In response to the concern expressed in this connection by the Secretary-General, the General Assembly at its forty-third session adopted the Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security and on the Role of the United Nations in this Field (resolution 43/51).

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

Senegal appeals to all the main organs of the Organization and Member States for direct concerted action to prevent conflicts. The Charter provides an appropriate legal framework, and that Declaration not only enshrines the political will of Member States but also contains the necessary guidelines and recommendations to that effect.

Among other instances where this United Nations policy to eliminate situations which may affect international peace and security can be applied, Namibia must indeed be a test case.

The Security Council, which bears particular responsibility in the process of bringing independence to Namibia, after having adopted, by its resolution 435 (1978), the necessary steps to ensure free participation in the electoral process leading to the speedy accession of the Territory to independence, continues to play an active, positive and constructive role in support of the Secretary-General's efforts.

It is our duty, for present and future generations, to make a success of "Operation Namibia". That is why, as the United Nations independence plan invites us to do, we must ensure that the ballot is organized, the elections themselves are held and their results are certified only provided that the Secretary-General's Special Representative has, at each and every stage, verified the equity and applicability of all the measures relating to the political process.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

Without a firm and vigorous position being taken by the international community, together with constant vigilance to ensure that South Africa scrupulously respects both the letter and the spirit of resolution 435 (1978), the sacrifices of the Namibian people under the far-sighted and courageous leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization may well come to naught, as well as the efforts which have been made hitherto, and the whole process under way may be called into question once again. The selfless devotion of the members of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, that exemplar of international solidarity, would thus be ill rewarded, with incalculable consequences for the preservation of international peace and security.

If we can be firm and resolute, vigilant and committed, the valiant Namibian people will shortly see the dawn which heralds its freedom and independence. In that case, we would deserve the confidence the peoples and Governments of the world have placed in the United Nations and in the fundamental values it represents and could heartily welcome the new State of Namibia into the United Nations family.

While the situation in Namibia is a matter of deep concern, that which prevails in South Africa is a source of even greater anxiety, with the reinstatement of the state of emergency, the outlawing of anti-apartheid political organizations, the censorship of the press, arrests without trial, the imposition of the death sentence on political opponents despite appeals for clemency by the international community, as well as the organization of elections which are essentially anti-democratic because they exclude the black majority. Is it not high time for Pretoria to understand that it is pointless to try to swim against the current of history? South Africa should be aware that it will never be able to stem the heroic struggle being waged by the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the anti-apartheid organizations to bring to that country a non-racial, democratic and equal society.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

It is true that some signs seem to indicate that there have been certain tentative changes in perception. Until the proclaimed intentions are embodied in an effective policy which will in fact put an end to apartheid, we must remain on our guard and increase our pressure on the Pretoria régime. My delegation will have occasion to revert to this when our Assembly holds its special session devoted to apartheid in December 1989.

While there has been a decline in tension in international politics, while a number of regional conflicts are being pacified and there is growing hope of peace, the international economic situation is becoming more and more disquieting. Those who are victims of it are essentially the men, women and children living in the regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, which are faced with socio-economic realities which in many respects are worse than those which prevailed 25 years ago. Subsistence societies; populations with no hope, exposed to famine, poverty and natural disasters, desertification and locust infestations; economies devastated by interminable crisis; the marginal treatment that is all that is given to the economies of developing countries; and the exclusion of those economies from decision-making processes regarding the international economic situation - that is the harsh reality faced by the developing countries.

Of course, there are certain prospects which may still give us a glimmer of hope. That is true, for example, of the forthcoming special session to be held in April 1990, a session of the General Assembly on economic co-operation. It is also true of the Paris Conference in September 1990 on the least developed countries, and the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in 1991.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

But how many such meetings on which our people have hung their hopes have finally proved to be totally disheartening with respect to any tangible results?

Thus in a year and a half the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development will be reached. But, the critical economic situation in Africa, whose recovery and development were the two main purposes of that Programme of Action, is far from having improved. On the contrary, it is worsening as the days go by. As was clearly indicated by the mid-term appraisal, the response expected from the developed countries and international financial and development institutions has been far from commensurate with the efforts and constraints the African countries have imposed upon themselves.

Therefore, in future, to make the best of what happens to us, we must bring to bear much more our sense of solidarity and shared responsibility.

In another area, the agreed international target in the field of public aid for development, adopted by the Assembly 20 years ago, has still not been attained, and current trends, according to experts, seem to be moving towards stagnation and even regression.

As far as financial flows between North and South are concerned, the fact is that there has been an unprecedented net transfer of resources from South to North, notwithstanding commitments made particularly in the case of Africa at this very place in May 1986, which very clearly indicates the growing gap between the developed world of the North and the underdeveloped world of the South.

Turning to the external debt of the developing countries, if certain remedies have been mooted today, a global and final settlement is still a thing of the future.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

Speaking from this rostrum in September 1987, we noted with satisfaction the decisions taken by a number of countries to cancel or convert into gifts the public debt contracted by African countries seriously affected by the crisis. Today it is our pleasure to welcome the decision, announced in Dakar by President François Mitterrand at the third summit meeting of French-speaking African countries, to cancel as of 1 January 1990 all debts with respect to development aid in the case of 35 African countries. My country is also gratified that similar decisions have since been announced by Belgium and quite recently by Italy.

If it is clear that these unilateral and transitional measures offer relief to the recipient countries, it is none the less evident that if they are to be fully effective they should be followed up by general structural measures which would be the outcome of a multilateral consultation between the debtors on the one hand and creditor nations and international bodies on the other.

Finally, what can we say that has not already been said of the situation besetting the commodity prices of the countries of the South, whose constant decline has led to even greater vulnerability for economies already undergoing structural adjustments for which they have paid a high price in human and social resources?

This gloomy picture of the world economy should encourage us to take a more realistic look at things and to be more disciplined in our actions. It calls for genuine concerted action patterned after the groundwork already done in certain fields such as disarmament, the environment, drugs and the settlement of international conflicts.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

The collective impulse which has been noticeable for some years in connection with the dangerous arms race; the progress that has been or is now being achieved in the effort to bring about effective disarmament; the praiseworthy initiatives taken to protect the ecological environment; the desire which mobilizes everyone, both peoples and Governments, to carry out an implacable struggle against drugs; and the political will revealed in the approach taken to defusing and resolving international conflicts are all indicative of two things that the world has become aware of - first, the oneness of our environment, irrespective of the diversity of its security, military, health and social components, as well as ecological, political and economic factors, and, secondly, the need to meet the major challenges of mankind in a concerted, joint and peaceful way.

Let us not be mistaken. Neither the countries of the North themselves nor exclusively those of the South can meet all these challenges - not only because pollution, drugs, chemical weapons and other strategic weapons do not respect State borders and should be treated on a world-wide basis, but also because each of these questions incorporates a number of aspects whose relation to economic and social development is essential. Thus, the whole range of problems relating to drugs reveals the link between the economy, health and society, and the question of waste products reveals the relationship between industry, ecology and development; the question of disarmament illustrates the interrelated complex of security, peace and development, just as efforts to eradicate underdevelopment must necessarily include the twofold dimension of, on the one hand, furnishing incentives for production, particularly by boosting commodity export earnings, and, on the other, relieving the debt burden and improving social conditions in the underdeveloped countries.

When we take an overall look at the relations and interactions between these various problems, we must realize that we are facing a system that is a homogeneous

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

whole, and that the necessary pre-condition for real progress is simultaneous action on all of the different elements of that system. It is in this context that we should view the initiative taken in July 1989 by the Heads of State of Egypt, Senegal and Venezuela and by the Prime Minister of India to reinstitute a North-South dialogue on matters of common concern for both hemispheres, and also through regular summit consultations. This initiative has already gained the support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and here, of certain delegations. I have no doubt that the Assembly will give it the necessary world support so that it may become a reality in the near future.

Among the most painful realities at the end of this twentieth century, famine is undoubtedly the most repugnant, both because of its persistent nature and because of its manifestations. Indeed, it is really unacceptable that, while in the northern hemisphere, overproduction and overconsumption lead to enormous waste - a barely tolerable level of waste - elsewhere, every passing minute takes a death toll of thousands of people who are dying from hunger, including a large number of children in the third world in general and in Africa more specifically. The spectre of children, women and old people dying of hunger must be removed forever. That is possible - and indeed, it is less difficult than one might imagine, because there are means available to us.

Three years ago the head of the State of Senegal, His Excellency President Abdou Diouf, receiving the Africa Leadership prize of the Hunger Project, which was then being awarded for the first time, put forward the idea of a world-wide front for the eradication of hunger in Africa and throughout the world before the end of the century. This campaign, particularly in Africa, was designed to reverse the trend towards deterioration of the food situation and increasing

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

dependency on external sources, to preserve the ecological balance of the continent and to promote the emergence of new systems of production and protection of more better suitable crops.

On behalf of the Senegalese delegation, I pay a tribute to those who have taken the initiatives of putting forward at the present session a proposal that this last decade of our century be declared the decade for the elimination of hunger throughout the world. It is my hope that this project will take shape very rapidly with the active assistance of all countries and international agencies concerned, and that the objectives of that decade will in fact be achieved on the threshold of the third millenium, in 10 years' time.

I have just referred to children as being in the forefront of those who fall victim to famine. While famine is one of the main causes of infant mortality, it is not the only factor that can be regarded as a violation of the rights of this fragile yet essential component of mankind which is the child. Thirty years ago, in order to afford protection to children, the international community adopted the Declaration on the Rights of the Child. 1989 is also the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Child. This twofold commemoration should, we believe, provide us with an opportunity to stress the need to give better protection to children and to promote the interests of this precious human resource by adopting an appropriate legal framework that will regulate the fundamental rights of children in all their aspects. To that end, Senegal co-sponsored the draft that became resolution 43/112 of 8 December 1988, in which the General Assembly requested the Commission on Human Rights to give the highest priority to the draft convention on the rights of the child and to submit it to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

In keeping with its cultural values, Africa has been constantly associated with the efforts made by the international community to promote and protect the rights of the child. In many countries of the continent, major initiatives have been taken to benefit children as part of the international year devoted to the protection, survival and development of the African child, proclaimed by the OAU in 1988.

I should therefore like to echo what has been said by other members of the international community to the effect that not only should the draft convention on the rights of the child be adopted before the end of the present session of the General Assembly, but that it should be ratified by all Member States as soon as possible and the long-awaited summit on children should be held shortly.

I have referred to the questions of the environment and drugs. I shall not say anything more about these, except to reiterate the determination of my country to continue to afford its full co-operation in matters of the protection of the environment. It has already done this by participating at the highest possible level, at the beginning of the year in the Netherlands, in the meeting of Heads of State that resulted in the Hague Declaration, and by proposing, in Geneva this year, that protection of the environment should include measures for combating desertification and drought, which are a matter of priority for a number of countries, including African countries. Likewise, Dakar recently hosted two important ministerial meetings on the marine environment of the Atlantic and on industrial waste. Finally, it was on the initiative of my country that the most recent summit conference of the OAU proclaimed 1990 the African year for the environment.

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

Regarding efforts to combat drugs, to which Senegal attaches major importance, here I should like to announce that the Senegalese deputies, meeting in special session, are at present considering a bill that would authorize our country to ratify the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which will make my country the first State in Africa and the second in the world to ratify it.

In other words, Senegal fully supports the bold steps taken by Colombia which have been supported by other countries, including the United States of America, to struggle against this scourge of our times. We likewise subscribe to the idea of an international meeting on this important issue.

In conclusion, if I have devoted the latter parts of my address to the question of improving the international legal order, that is - as delegations know since our countries share the same conviction - because Senegal has always adhered firmly to the primacy of law.

In this connection I cannot fail to note with satisfaction the conclusions reached at the meeting of the non-aligned countries on the primacy of international law, held at The Hague this year to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the first peace conference.

My country has promoted the primacy of law to a cardinal principle of its domestic political system as well as its foreign policy.

Internally, my country's well-known commitment has taken the form of a multi-party democratic system with 17 distinct political formations, some 20 newspapers and periodicals, and open elections.

Externally, Senegal has made respect for international law a sacred standard of conduct, both in time of peace and in periods of crisis, together with its distant and neighbouring partners. Through me, it reiterates here and now its firm

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

desire always to respect, and always to ensure respect for, international law, starting with that which defines the frontiers we inherited when we acceded to independence and which define our territorial identity within the international community of States.

Mr. AKE (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): Sir, the superb qualifications we know you to possess, the wealth of experience you bring to international affairs and to the United Nations, your commitment to the cause of peace, and above all that of your great country, Nigeria, to which Côte d'Ivoire feels bound by so many ties of friendship and co-operation, constitute for us a whole series of reasons whole-heartedly to welcome your resounding election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly.

Please accept my delegation's and my own heartfelt and fraternal congratulations and our most sincere wishes for continued success.

We also congratulate your illustrious predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, who so efficiently, effectively and felicitously guided the General Assembly's work at its preceding session.

Allow me, finally, to pay a special tribute - a well-deserved tribute, indeed - to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who has devoted a major part of his long and varied diplomatic career to serving and defending the noble ideals of peace and freedom, justice and progress, co-operation and solidarity embodied in the United Nations. The international community today welcomes and reaps the fruits of his intelligence, perspicacity and steadfast, tenacious efforts, as well as of his negotiating strength and skill and his persuasiveness, which have allowed the United Nations to restore its credibility and reaffirm itself as the focal point par excellence in the quest for the peaceful

(Mr. Ake, Cote d'Ivoire)

resolution of international problems. We should like to assure the Secretary-General once more of our complete confidence and unreserved support for him and for all the steps he has taken to ensure the triumph of these ideals.

This session has begun in a particularly serene international climate fostered by the dialogue, built on confidence, engaged in for the past two years by the two major world leaders, the President of the United States of America and the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a dialogue we are quite appropriately assessing in terms of its beneficial effects for the international political situation.

The thick wall of fear and distrust is beginning to crumble, the dynamics of negotiation are increasingly replacing confrontation and the pitting of one side against the other, and conflicts are ebbing.

Thus we have noted with relief and reassurance the progress - inadequate, to be sure, but none the less significant and promising - made in the realm of nuclear disarmament with the commitment of the major Powers to do all they can to eliminate, under appropriate international controls, weapons of mass destruction that continue to threaten holocaust on our poor planet. Progress is also perceptible in terms of détente between East and West in the settlement of various regional or bilateral conflicts, as well as in the progressive elimination of the political oppression that is driving peoples to take recourse to force and violence to enforce their inalienable right to decide for themselves and to live in freedom and dignity.

But this somewhat idyllic portrayal of the international situation must not lead us to overlook the darkness of the sky. At any time all of this can be called into question if we do not display enough imagination to resolve peacefully, and

JWM/16

A/44/PV.19
69-70

(Mr. Ake, Cote d'Ivoire)

once and for all, the conflicts that subsist and to find realistic ways to end the injustices that mark international economic relations and the anguish that is today the lot of the developing world.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

Before sharing with the Assembly my delegation's observations on some of the principal agenda items before this session, I should like to state once again the Côte d'Ivoire's deep commitment to the United Nations and our full commitment to its noble ideals, which we are seeking to transform into an effective reality day by day, both within our country and abroad.

Our unswerving fidelity to the principles we share with the United Nations does not allow us to indulge in demagogy nor to compromise our dignity on any pretext whatsoever. Let us be clear: Côte d'Ivoire wants to be a friend to all. It scrupulously respects the sovereignty and dignity of others as well as their views and their approaches to various problems. Those may differ from ours, but, in the final analysis, such differences are minor, since we all have the same goal: to contribute, each in his own way, to resolving problems and to strengthening international peace and security. Is Côte d'Ivoire not entitled to expect from others the same behaviour and the same respect?

We are prompted today, as we have been in the past and as we shall continue to be in the future, by the sole concern to serve the noble cause of peace, in full freedom and independence, while giving pride of place to the virtues of dialogue and negotiation and resolutely opposing anything that might eventually lead to violence and war.

Although we can justifiably welcome the climate of confidence that reigns in the world and the resultant lessening of international tensions, we must none the less recognize that certain situations still give us cause for serious concern. This is especially true in Africa, in Asia, in the Middle East and in Latin America, where the right to self-determination and the freedom to choose one's system are often put at risk or influenced by outside interference, by the hankering of some for power and by the lackey-like friendships of others.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

In Africa, it is reassuring to note that the dialogue we had been recommending since 1971 as the best means of resolving all disputes and conflicts, including the intolerable situation prevailing in the southern part of the continent, is today making progress and opening positive prospects for the future in that region.

As far as the situation in South Africa in particular is concerned, it is obvious that we firmly and unreservedly condemn the abhorrent system of apartheid. However, while understanding and supporting the struggle of our black brothers for recognition of their right to dignity, we continue to believe that dialogue and negotiation can foster understanding and mutual trust among the South African communities, and especially between the black majority and the oppressor white minority.

It is clear, as the Secretary-General has stated, that a mere dilution or softening of apartheid will not answer the expectations of the majority of the people of South Africa nor of the world as a whole. We therefore once again urge the South African authorities to take the necessary steps to create without delay a climate propitious to true dialogue in South Africa, displaying the political courage required to eliminate, once and for all, the inhuman policy of apartheid that is preventing the harmonious evolution of South African society and compromising South Africa's relations with its neighbours, with Africa and with the outside world.

In this connection they must give still more tangible proofs of their resolve to turn the sad page of apartheid by unconditionally freeing Nelson Mandela, whose continued house arrest is totally without justification; by freeing all political detainees; and by granting freedom of expression to those movements opposed to apartheid. Lastly, we urge them to enter into dialogue with the black majority and to build the South Africa of tomorrow, a democratic, egalitarian and fraternal South Africa in which South Africans of all races, backgrounds and faiths

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

can live in peace, freedom and harmony within their common homeland, whose future they will guarantee and ensure together in a united Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire strongly urges the South African leadership to commit itself resolutely to that path, for the peace and concord of their country are at stake. It is up to them, and to them alone, to create the conditions for that indispensable dialogue, to which, we are convinced, our black brothers will be receptive.

The Brazzaville and New York agreements entered into on 22 December 1988 by Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the mediation of the United States of America and the discreet but no-less-effective contribution of the Soviet Union, have made it possible to clear away the obstacles that have been preventing the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia and to foster the peaceful settlement of the situation in Angola.

We welcome that. We express the hope that the process of Namibian independence may be concluded without further setbacks or intimidation so that free, regular and democratic elections may be held to enable the Namibian people finally to win back their full sovereignty and their proper place in the concert of free nations.

Despite years of heroic struggle against Portuguese colonialism our Angolan brothers are still, regrettably, not at peace, owing to the fratricidal war that is still unfortunately raging in their country after 14 years of hard-won independence. We welcome the 22 June 1989 Gbadolite declaration, in which the Angolan leaders have proclaimed to the world their determination to put an end to that lengthy civil war.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

A process of national reconciliation and negotiation has finally, after many ups and downs and fratricidal confrontations, made it possible to glimpse the outlines of a settlement to the dispute between Chad and Libya, with the normalization in 1988 of relations between the two countries and the conclusion of the Algiers framework agreement of 31 August 1989.

An era of understanding, tolerance, co-operation and renewed friendship between those two countries has thus been entered, in the best interest of their peoples. We pay tribute to all who have contributed to this happy outcome.

With regard to the situation in certain countries in eastern and southern Africa, we welcome the relaxation of tension in those areas and the readiness of the Governments concerned to enter into talks with their opposite numbers and their neighbours to restore peace and concord in their countries and to improve good-neighbourly relations.

In Western Sahara the tireless efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have led to acceptance by the parties to the dispute, with certain reservations, of the proposed peace plan. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having set up at United Nations Headquarters a technical commission to put the finishing touches on ways and means of implementing that plan which should enable the people of Western Sahara to determine their own fate through general and regular elections.

We were grieved by the painful conflict that has recently caused a deterioration in relations between two fraternal countries, Senegal and Mauritania, with which we have solid ties of friendship and co-operation, both bilaterally in the Economic Community of West Africa (ECWA) and in the Economic Community of West

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

African States (ECOWAS). We urge the Governments of those two countries to do all they can to promote the normalization of the many-faceted relationships their close proximity demands, in the interests of peace between their peoples and of peace and co-operation in our subregion.

In this connection we support the mediation efforts of the current Chairman of the OAU to achieve a peaceful and just solution of that conflict on the basis of OAU charter principles.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

Other hotbeds of tension continue to command our attention. In the Middle East we feel that the situation will remain alarming so long as a peaceful political solution is not found to the Palestinian question, which is the core of the problem. To achieve such a solution, we have affirmed that to be lasting and viable any peaceful settlement in the Middle East must take into consideration the two inescapable realities of the region - the Israeli reality and the Palestinian reality. Reciprocal acknowledgement of these realities will create the climate of confidence necessary for the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue needed to achieve a negotiated settlement of the problem.

I should like to take this opportunity to specify that my country was the first to proclaim, here from this very rostrum a few years ago, that the Palestinian question had to be considered and dealt with not only in terms of humanitarian concerns and of assistance to refugees driven from their land, but had also to be viewed as an essentially political problem to which a political solution must be found to put an end to the spiral of violence and to restore peace in the region.

Given the imperative of peace, it was for us a matter of doing justice to the Palestinian people by responding to their legitimate aspirations: the free exercise of the right to self-determination and independence and recognition of their right to a homeland separate and independent from other States in the region whose existence - including that of Israel - will be assured and guaranteed.

After many twists and turns, things have evolved to the point where today we can legitimately entertain the hope that the aspirations of that people will soon be achieved.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

The proclamation in Algiers in 1988 of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council falls into the logical trend we have been recommending for some time.

We take note of the decisive steps taken in this connection by the Palestinian Command and its leaders who, in endorsing Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have displayed their readiness for dialogue to achieve a negotiated settlement of the problem. We hope that the Israelis, for their part, will overcome their distrust and decide that dialogue is still possible with the Palestinians - the very people with whom they will one day have to coexist harmoniously on the land of Palestine they share.

Hence Côte d'Ivoire is in favour of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation, beyond that of the permanent members of the Security Council, of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to take stock of the situation as a whole and consider the various plans put forward in order to give peace a chance in a region that needs it so much. Such a conference will, we hope, make it possible to arrive at an overall, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East, a settlement that will put an end to the state of belligerence that has prevailed there for more than four decades and make it possible for Israeli troops to withdraw from occupied Arab territories, while guaranteeing the right of the State of Israel to exist and to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, along with the national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to a free and independent homeland with equally secure and recognized borders, with all the political and juridical consequences flowing therefrom.

We have maintained and continue to maintain at the highest levels the most useful contacts with the PLO and its leadership and with other States in the

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

region. We intend to pursue them in the interests of peace and harmony in the Middle East.

In this quest for peace in that part of the world so dear to us all, how could we not cry out in indignation in the face of the tragedy that is unfolding in Lebanon, where a tolerant, engaging and ingenious people, because of divisiveness in its midst - something that invites foreign intervention - is being decimated by blind violence and dying. We endorse the appeals for a cessation of hostilities and an end to the brutal bombardment that is destroying human life and the infrastructure of the country. We support the efforts of the Tripartite Committee of the League of Arab States to ensure that the guns fall silent and that negotiations begin among the Lebanese communities - of all political parties and all religious faiths - in order to define the basis for peaceful and fraternal coexistence within a reconciled Lebanon which would thus regain its unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

Finally, we should like to stress the great merit of all those belligerents who have had the courage to renounce force and overcome rancour and hatred in order to sit down at the negotiating table and join in dialogue with a view to putting an end to the conflicts in which they were involved. Their courage has made it possible to achieve satisfactory results in the quest for peace in the world. Thus, the Geneva Agreements of 14 April 1988 made it possible for Soviet troops to withdraw from Afghanistan; and the definitive settlement of this conflict now hinges on scrupulous respect by the signatories for the provisions of these Agreements.

Acceptance by Iran and Iraq of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) of 28 July 1987 and the cease-fire that entered into force on 20 August 1988 should, with the mediation of the United Nations Secretary-General, facilitate direct

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

dialogue between the two countries with a view to settling the remaining questions and making it possible for them to normalize their relations.

My country welcomes the peace and co-operation agreements entered into by the countries of Central America, in particular the agreement signed recently at Tela, Honduras. We support steps taken by the Contadora and Support Groups with a view to establishing democracy and peace in that part of the world, free from any foreign interference.

We encourage the resumption of dialogue between the two Koreas aimed at the peaceful reunification proclaimed in the Panmunjom declaration of 4 July 1972. We can see only advantages in having these two countries, with which we maintain excellent relations, becoming fully fledged Members of the Organization, something which could contribute to fostering this dialogue. Such a request from them would naturally receive our backing.

We also support in Cyprus the dialogue between the Cypriot communities to restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that Member State and guarantee its non-aligned status.

With regard to Cambodia, the holding of the Paris international conference opened up new prospects in the process of restoring peace and achieving reconciliation in that country. That process will be greatly facilitated by ending interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia, notably by the effective withdrawal under appropriate international control of Vietnamese troops, something that would reassure the Cambodian opposition and leave it up to the Cambodians of all persuasions to settle their own problems by way of fraternal and confident dialogue.

As President Houphouët-Boigny is wont to say, peace is one and indivisible. It is over-arching, all-encompassing and inseparable from development. Hence there can be no peace in the world if only one region enjoys peace and is awash in

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

opulence while others are ravaged by war and plunged into poverty which is gaining more and more ground. That is why we believe that, while we must strive as hard as we can to consolidate peace where it is most fragile or most threatened and restore it where it has been destroyed, we must also put an end to the inequities and economic difficulties with which many of us are confronted so that we can equally enjoy the benefits of freedom and peace, the very basis of development.

While we may now applaud the improvement in the international political climate - and we hope that it will continue - we must none the less recognize that the same is not true of international economic relations.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

The world economic situation is marked by an ever-widening gap between the developed countries and the developing countries, by the continued growth of the economies of the North, contrasting sharply with the great deterioration of the economies of the South, and by the imbalance in trade between a North that is getting richer and a South that is steadily growing poorer. That is caused by, among other things, the inexorable fall in the prices of raw materials, the constant worsening of the terms of trade and the heavy debt burden, which, in the final analysis, means a net negative transfer of capital from the South to the North.

The situation is particularly worrying for the African countries facing economic and financial difficulties so serious that their economic and social structures, so patiently built up, are in danger of crumbling. If energetic measures are not taken to allow those countries to resist the trend and at least to subsist, they will be plunged into anarchy, disorder and instability, threatening the social peace that is vital to ensure their development. It is our duty to ensure that that does not happen.

Explaining his thoughts on the matter, President Houphouët-Boigny said recently in Dakar, at the francophone Summit, that just as

"the man who is hungry is not free, a country that does not lead a normal life because its economy is in danger, it has a crushing debt burden, its trade is threatened and its modest resources are shamelessly exploited - in brief, a poor country that is kept in that state by speculation - is not a free country."

That is indeed the reality of our situation in Africa today. Our political independence and our freedom, so dearly bought, will have no true meaning if they are not based on genuine economic development.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

It is true that over recent years our Governments have made remarkable efforts and have begun enormous reform programmes to bring us out of our present difficulties and pursue our growth. Unfortunately, the results have not met our expectations and our situation continues dangerously to become worse.

The reasons are simple. We live in a hostile economic climate, because of the selfishness of the developed countries, with their increased protectionism, and the mentality of those whose only motivation is easy profits and who, to their shame, are becoming richer simply through speculation. Those people are playing with the fruits of the labour of our courageous peoples, to whose fate they are totally indifferent.

Such speculation deprives us of important resources needed to finance our development, to meet our external commitments and to make available to our young people, in this computer age, training in the citadels of knowledge, science, technical skills and the technology that will allow us successfully to meet the great challenge of underdevelopment and contributing to bringing about a new international economic order that is more just and equitable.

Côte d'Ivoire has made great strides along the path of development, through its own efforts and with the valuable help of friendly countries and international financial and monetary organizations. It has also been helped in this by the climate of peace and the resulting political stability. But that development is handicapped today by the drastic losses we are suffering in the export of our main agricultural products, as a result of speculation.

In what follows we are not telling anybody anything new. That is especially true of those present who are familiar with the problem or who are also suffering from it. But it is good to put the matter in perspective by revealing that in three years our country lost nearly \$9 billion on its products. Over the same period it paid out more than \$6 billion to reschedule its external debt, whose

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

repayment it has had to suspend. That was not because we would not pay, but because we could not.

When one thinks of the enormous profits reaped in the developed countries on products such as coffee and cocoa, one is entitled to ask what kind of peace with justice we are seeking to bring about in the world.

The agonizing debt problem, which has been the subject of a number of international meetings, has again occupied an important place in this debate. It has done so for the simple reason that we must find a solution giving hope of dispelling the uncertainties hanging over the future of the countries particularly affected.

We consider that the debt results from the inequality in international trade; the reason is essentially to be found at that level.

We fully support the technical solutions suggested in the various proposals, initiatives or plans put forward recently as a result of efforts to think about this thorny problem and find realistic, satisfactory solutions, such as the outright cancellation of some of the debts, a lightening, rescheduling or partial reduction of others and of their servicing and the granting of separate supplementary facilities to provide financial aid on concessionary terms to developing countries, particularly medium-income African countries.

We pay tribute to the developed countries that have already taken steps in that regard by deciding to cancel or reduce the debts owed them certain developing countries.

However, we believe that proper importance should be attached to the question of fair payment for raw materials. Is it possible to conceive of a global strategy that fails to ensure just remuneration for those materials and to guarantee the stabilization of the export earnings from them, in order to resolve the debt problem? The North-South dialogue, which we all hope will be resumed in order to

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

introduce ethics into international trade, should consider that question, which is vital for some of us.

The idea of lasting development, which is defined in the Brundtland report, is to foster harmony between man and his environment. It therefore assumes that concerns about a good environment will be integrated within the development process. That is imperative for both rich and poor countries, for development cannot be carried out at the cost of the degradation of the environment and the destruction of ecological balances. Therefore, the protection of the environment and any development strategy must be interrelated in such a way as to meet the needs of the present without jeopardizing future generations.

The United Nations conference on environment and development, to be held in 1992, will give an opportunity for in-depth debate on the question and for us all to become aware of our national and collective responsibilities with regard to the environment. It was in that spirit that Côte d'Ivoire took part at the highest level in March 1989 in the conference on the environment held at The Hague, and signed the Declaration that was adopted.

Drug trafficking, yet another scourge today crossing all borders and threatening the future of our youth, requires an international strategy to fight it, a strategy such as that defined in the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, concluded in Vienna on 20 December 1988 and submitted to States for ratification. The real fight against drugs must not be confined to increased action against traffickers and users; it also requires incentives to producers to devote themselves more to the production of legal, healthy cash crops, yielding enough profit for them to give up the growing of deadly herbs and plants.

I could not end this statement without recalling the important United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Congress

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

on Peace in the Minds of Men, held from 26 June to 1 July this year in Yamoussoukro, capital of Côte d'Ivoire, on the happy initiative of Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, the Director General of UNESCO. The preamble to UNESCO's constitution states:

"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

Personalities of diverse backgrounds, training and faith met in Côte d'Ivoire to consider the matter together and propose programmes of action to attain the noble goal of contributing to the search for peace and its defence, to define its outlines and the necessary conditions for it and to make the international community aware that peace is mankind's most precious possession and that all man's activities must be devoted to preserving it at all costs.

(Mr. Ake, Côte d'Ivoire)

The Yamoussoukro Declaration, the fruit of their reflection, embodied and articulated their faith in a promising future for mankind: a future that we must build patiently within a new and all-encompassing vision of peace, by adopting, at the level of each of us, of our Governments and of our respective peoples, a behaviour which would effectively ensure peace in the world through the triumph of freedom over oppression, of justice over inequity, of solidarity over egoism, of respect for human rights, above all the right to live, over the disregard of such rights, of shared good fortune over regionalized poverty, in brief, full material and spiritual realization for people in a sound environment, with people thus freed at last from the uncertainties of tomorrow.

Côte d'Ivoire intends, for its part, to strive tirelessly for that peace: peace in the hearts and minds of all people.

Mr. KAFE (Comoros) (interpretation from French): Sir, I should like first to convey to you, on behalf of my delegation, our heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of our Organization. By electing you to that high office, the Assembly has thus paid a tribute to you, an eminent diplomat, and to your personal qualities. It has also paid a tribute to your country, Nigeria, a country friendly to my country, and to the active role it has played in the Special Committee against Apartheid. We wish you every success in discharging your new responsibilities, and you may rest assured of our full co-operation.*

I should like to take this opportunity also to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, whose devotion, authority and competence made the work of the

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

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

previous session so orderly and positive. I also wish to take this opportunity once again to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his constant constructive attitude and effective work for international peace.

Since last year a new era based on dialogue and consultation has emerged in relations between the two super-Powers. This détente can only be beneficial for world peace. It is also encouraging to note that these positive changes are gradually starting to allay the attitude of distrust that had been prevalent since the cold war. This situation is also a sign of a new language based on improved mutual understanding and a common quest for peaceful solutions.

However, the battle is far from over, since this phenomenon is not irreversible. That is why we must remain on our guard and see to it that this dynamic process continues in the interests of mankind. Accordingly, the role of our Organization is decisive to the extent that each time conflicts cannot be peacefully resolved through dialogue, our Organization must give proper attention to such questions.

In these developments, the redrawing of the international landscape presupposes compliance by all States with the United Nations Charter, bearing in mind that a group of countries, whatever its power, should not presume to be the custodian of the world or that other States should merely be bystanders.

From the standpoint of politics, while we welcome the fact that some conflicts are being resolved and are on the way to relative peace, we must, on the other hand, recognize that in the economic field no meaningful progress has been made. Whereas the developed countries have managed to overcome their difficulties and have experienced new economic and technological development prospects, it must be acknowledged that in the third world countries the tendency has been for conditions

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

to become worse. The continued deterioration of the terms of trade has worsened the paradoxical phenomenon of the transfer of resources from the poorest countries to the richer countries. Clearly, this situation is particularly distressing for my country, Comoros, since it has suffered so acutely from the adverse effects of the current international economic situation. Comoros is a small country consisting of scattered islands, with a lack of natural resources, all of which has impeded our development. There are other factors that are just as serious, such as selling our export products at a loss or their continuing depreciation, which applies to vanilla, clove, copra and perfume essences which have had to compete on world markets with synthetic products. This phenomenon has been made worse because of the unfavourable terms of loans for investment, which have considerably worsened the public debt and, on the other hand, a disturbing population explosion, high unemployment rates, and a treasury deficit, which have made the country very much dependent on foreign technical and financial assistance.

In order for members better to understand the difficulties that these constraints have caused our economy, I should like to give some indication of the general state of the economy of our country. Following independence, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros had only a rudimentary road system. This impelled the Comorian Government, under the enlightened guidance of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane, to establish an economic development policy to open the country to the outside world. Naturally that was only possible with the financial assistance of the international community. To that end, a round table of donors, the first of its kind, was organized in 1984 in Moroni, our capital.

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

That meeting made the international community aware of our difficulties and led to a thorough examination of ways and means whereby we could revitalize our young economy. Thus our country was provided with a basic infrastructure.

Inter alia, the road system was gradually improved, a deep-water port was built, and an international airport provided. In addition, other measures were taken to bring about great budgetary discipline in order to improve public finances.

Despite these efforts, medium-term economic prospects and the financial situation are still matters of concern. Given these circumstances, the Government of the Comoros took the decision to negotiate with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund a structural-adjustment programme to create conditions for a sounder economy. In this effort, the assistance of the international community is indispensable. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to appeal to all people of good will - bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations - to give us valuable assistance in the form of the financial aid necessary to support our adjustment programme.

Allow me now briefly to touch upon the international political situation. We note with satisfaction that détente is almost becoming a reality, thanks to the better understanding that has led to the easing of various pockets of tension. It is up to the international community to make every effort to preserve these valuable achievements.

In Namibia, the process towards independence and peace has seen some positive developments. It is up to this Organization to ensure that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is implemented strictly in order that the people of Namibia may be led to national sovereignty in dignity. We reaffirm the imperative need to put an end to the horrendous system of apartheid in order to create a just, democratic, multiracial society in South Africa.

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

On the Maghreb, we welcome the climate of détente and co-operation that the Heads of State of the region have decided to establish. We encourage them to continue along this path, which we believe will open up favourable prospects for the implementation of the Secretary-General's peace plan for Western Sahara.

The withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan has not put an end to the conflict there - far from it. We must support the efforts of this Organization in its quest, with the parties concerned, for ways and means of restoring peace in that country.

Turning to the Korean peninsula, we reiterate once again the hope that the two Koreas - North and South - will persevere, through dialogue, in their efforts towards reunification of the country. We continue to believe that the admission of the two Koreas to membership of the United Nations will be a factor for peace and stability in the region.

On Cambodia, the process of dialogue in the quest for a peaceful solution should be continued. We call upon the parties concerned to demonstrate good will in order that peace may be restored to that country.

On the question of the Middle East, we note with bitter disappointment that the situation is still frozen. Indeed, the Palestinian people continues to be the target of the Zionist occupier and has been experiencing the most humiliating suffering, characterized by harsh repression, deportation, devastation of property, and the bombing of homes. We continue to affirm that there can be no just, lasting peace in the Middle East so long as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are not recognized and effectively exercised. In this regard, we support the idea of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties concerned, including, naturally, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

As a corollary of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the situation in Lebanon is still marked by violence and suffering. We believe it is time for Lebanon fully to regain its sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity. That is why my country supports the efforts of the international community - notably those of the Tripartite Committee - in seeking political solutions that can restore peace and achieve national reconciliation in Lebanon.

As regards the Iran-Iraq conflict, we welcome the cessation of war between those two countries after so many years of suffering and atrocities. We exhort them resolutely to commit themselves to a process of negotiation under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General, on the basis of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

My country, like all other countries of the region, reiterates its full support for the idea of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, a demilitarized, nuclear-free zone. We therefore support the plan to hold, in Sri Lanka in 1990, an international conference devoted to this problem.

I cannot conclude without saying something about a problem that is of great concern to the Comorian people and to the entire international community. Naturally, I am referring to the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. This item is again on the General Assembly's agenda. I do not wish to anticipate the debate on the subject that will take place at a later stage. For the time being, I will merely express the profound concern of the people and Government of Comoros at the persistence of this problem, which has existed for too long. Representatives will agree with me that the problem merits a final solution in keeping with the aspirations of the Comorian people as a whole. That is why, in a statement, the President of the Republic, Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane said he hoped "that the

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

winds of détente blowing in international relations might influence this matter favourably".

We hope that the dialogue that has been established at the level of Heads of State between France and Comoros may lead to a satisfactory solution based on law and justice. The international community must continue to lend support to the efforts of the Comorian people until its just cause triumphs.

On the threshold of the last decade of the century, there are still many formidable challenges before us.

(Mr. Kafe, Comoros)

Whether in the economic or the political spheres, mankind as a whole needs much imagination in confronting the host of problems it faces. Obviously, this will require greater solidarity and more equity in sharing resources and knowledge - the only conditions that can provide effective guarantees for peace in the world. To that end, our Organization should play its full part, because it remains the only bulwark against excesses and abuses that generate conflicts.

My Government solemnly reaffirms its dedication to the ideals of peace and justice set forth in the Charter, and we shall spare no effort to support the United Nations.

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

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

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): My delegation fully reciprocates the sentiments expressed by the Senior Minister of Pakistan about desiring good-neighbourly relations between our two countries. My Prime Minister has repeatedly declared that it is the highest priority of the Government of India to live in peace and friendship with all our neighbours, including Pakistan. It is therefore with some reluctance that my delegation feels compelled to speak in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made earlier this morning by the Senior Minister of Pakistan. The Simla Agreement signed by the Governments of India and Pakistan in 1972 provides the basis for resolving all outstanding issues between the two countries through bilateral negotiations and by peaceful means. My delegation therefore regrets the reference in this forum by the Senior Minister of Pakistan to the so-called question of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. I. HAQUE (Pakistan): The position of Pakistan on the question of Jammu and Kashmir is well known. Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory. We therefore maintain that this problem needs to be resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions on the subject and in the spirit of similar agreement.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.