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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 15 October 1985, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. DE PINIES (Spain)

- Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations [39] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, President of the Republic of Cyprus

Elhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of the Gambia

Ms. M. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica

Mr. El Gizouli Daf'Alla, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan

Mr. Herbert A. Blaize, Prime Minister of Grenada

Mr. Arturo Fajardo-Maldonado, Special Envoy of the Head of State of the Republic of Guatemala

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

COMMEMORATION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This morning the General Assembly will first hear a statement by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Spyros Kyprianou.

Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted to the rostrum.

President KYPRIANOU: It is a great pleasure, Sir, for me to be addressing the General Assembly under your presidency today. It is very proper that this historic session is being presided over by a personality of your experience and skill. I take this opportunity to wish you every every success in your important task.

I should also like to offer my felicitations and best wishes to the Organization on its fortieth anniversary and to congratulate the Secretary-General and his colleagues for the convening of this commemorative session.

The United Nations started as a dream and as an expression of the hope of the post-war world for permanent peace and security. We cannot, of course, maintain that after 40 years of existence the dream has been completely shattered and the hope turned into despair. We can, however, claim that the dream has not become a reality and that the hope has not been vindicated. International peace and security are not as yet a tangible reality as envisioned by the United Nations at the time of its historic birth.

This conclusion, though disappointing, does not diminish the value and usefulness of the United Nations which, had it not existed, should have been

(President Kyprianou)

invented and, since it does exist, must be preserved and strengthened. If international peace and security are still no more than a mere wish and a mere hope, it is not the United Nations Charter that is to blame.

If human rights are so flagrantly trampled upon at a time when there is so much advocacy for such rights, if the arms race, conventional and nuclear, is escalating and regional conflagrations are not being averted at a time when everyone speaks of the need for peaceful coexistence, if starvation and misery are plaguing so many millions of people at a time when man has reached the moon, if injustice many times defeats justice, if sincerity is often replaced by hypocrisy, if the concept of might is right is gaining the upper hand, it is not this Organization that is to blame, nor its machinery and procedures.

The main reason for that situation is the lack of political will or the inability to implement and enforce the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations owing to considerations alien to the letter and spirit of the Charter.

Small countries such as Cyprus have witnessed with horror the trampling of principles during the occupation of their territory while, at the same time, a United Nations peace-keeping force is either contemptuously brushed aside or is simply redeployed and the Security Council confines itself to mere calls for the withdrawal of the forces of aggression without the necessary follow-up to see to it that its decisions are respected.

Can anyone seriously dispute the fact that had the aggressor known that, invading, he would face the full wrath and might of the collective action of the United Nations as provided for by the Charter, he would not have proceeded with that illegal act? That is why past and present violators of the principles of the Charter and of United Nations resolutions have gone ahead with their actions in the certainty that, some weeks after committing an act of aggression, they would simply be confronted with requests or admonitions.

(President Kyprianou)

We are today celebrating the anniversary of the United Nations on the occasion of the completion of 40 years since its establishment. Forty years is a long enough period to allow us to judge and evaluate the general performance of the United Nations and the services it has offered mankind. And this anniversary is a good occasion for all of us to record the past, to take stock of the present and to chart the course for the future in order to ensure a more effective role for the United Nations.

The effectiveness of the United Nations, as I have already pointed out, is not of course commensurate with the high hopes we invested in it 40 years ago. Over-confidence in the ability of international institutions, born of the desperate desire to build a new and better world, very quickly diminished and gradually turned into reservation and scepticism. The cold war which immediately followed the establishment of the United Nations dimmed the original vision and brought into focus the conflicting interests of the big Powers, as well as the inability of the United Nations to be effective without their joint purposeful support.

It is pertinent in that connection to recall the words of the first Secretary-General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie, that

"It cannot be repeated too often that the United Nations was founded on the assumption that the major Powers would be in substantial agreement with one another."

It would of course be a great mistake to underestimate or ignore the work accomplished by the United Nations during its 40 years of existence in a period of revolutionary change in international political and social life. The United Nations has managed to perform creative work and to serve mankind even when enormous difficulties have restricted its role and curtailed the range of its activities.

(President Kyprianou)

The United Nations has laid down standards of international conduct and has introduced the principle of equal responsibilities and equal rights in international relations. It has played a leading and positive role in the process of decolonization, while its most significant contribution has been in the fields of human rights and the social and economic development of poor States. It has also contributed to the containment of local clashes and the prevention of their escalation into wider conflagrations by creating and implementing the institution of peace-keeping operations. Even in regard to the extremely complex problem of arms limitation and disarmament, the United Nations has all along been working hard, and with consistency, to provide the right framework for its solution.

(President Kyprianou)

Beyond this noteworthy and significant work, the United Nations is available as a forum for all States to set out their positions and views on specific or more general problems and to express their approval or disapproval, their opposition or concurrence, concerning action on and the handling of inter-State relations or matters of wider concern. Weak States, oppressed peoples and the victims of injustice can speak and be heard in the United Nations; they can be vindicated and morally strengthened in their struggle to safeguard their inalienable rights.

Any just cause, irrespective of its dimensions, may command support in the United Nations. If a practical and just solution cannot immediately be found, this is not because the United Nations lacks the necessary machinery and procedures; it is because setting those mechanisms and procedures in motion requires the approval of the Member States, and in particular of the stronger ones. And, unfortunately, that approval is given only after expediencies are weighed and only if the action is in harmony with the interests of the big Powers. Since in many cases that is a remote possibility, the just causes of wronged peoples will find in the United Nations moral support rather than practical vindication. Even this, of course, is some progress, but it cannot be regarded as at all satisfactory.

In dealing with international disputes, the United Nations provides opportunities for constructive dialogue and discussion, which, while they sometimes appear to be an exercise in futility and their practical result is not commensurate with the strong theoretical interest they might have aroused, are much better than inertness, which only contributes to the aggravation of international problems. The peaceful solution of political problems presupposes, of course, discussion and dialogue between the interested parties. The United Nations always provides a forum for such discussion and dialogue and, as long as the discussion of international disputes continues and the dialogue lasts, so will hope for their peaceful resolution.

(President Kyprianou)

The absence of a system of international security remains one of the stumbling blocks to any real progress towards disarmament and the promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes. All nations, and particularly small countries like my own, have a vital interest in the establishment of a system of collective security through the United Nations. It is the primary responsibility of the United Nations to safeguard international peace and security, which cannot be achieved through military alliances and increased armaments but only through the application of the provisions of the Charter and through strict adherence to them by all Member States. Only then can the prospects for peace improve. Only through a consensus achieved among all the sovereign nations of our interdependent world and through the forging of a collective will to give real and lasting effect to the Charter can the future of the United Nations and of mankind be guaranteed. Furthermore, only through the strengthening of multilateral co-operation can the United Nations be enabled to deal effectively with the global problems facing humanity, which cannot be dealt with in isolation or by one country or group of countries alone but only through the collective effort of all members of the international community.

As I have already indicated, however, the basic reason for the poor results achieved so far is the tendency of States to deal with international problems in a manner divorced from their obligations under the Charter, basing their stand on extraneous criteria such as alliances, geo-political and geo-strategic factors, affinities and other interests.

Even in cases of aggression and the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms there are attempts not only to find excuses for friends that violate the principles of the Charter, while condemning less friendly countries for lesser violations, but also to ignore even the minimum standards established by the United Nations by suggesting solutions that overtly or covertly entail options that set back the clock of history.

(President Kyprianou)

That attitude is often accompanied - and we have bitter experience of this - by the exertion of pressure on the weaker side, which is frequently the victim, or by a failure to exclude, ab initio, solutions which are either wholly or partly inconsistent with the principles of the Charter and its very purposes, as well as with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations. As a rule, such methodology confuses the issue and not only does not bring the desired results but also makes their achievement more difficult and more remote.

A host of unimplemented United Nations resolutions and innumerable instances of violation of the principles and provisions of the Charter lead to the consolidation of the general belief that the United Nations has already degenerated into a complaints bureau and an international registry for the mere recording of unresolved international political problems. I mention only, as pertinent examples, the problems of South Africa, Namibia, the Middle East and Cyprus, in order to underline how the relevant resolutions of the United Nations are being ignored and at the same time to stress the inability of the United Nations to prevent injustice at the expense of the weak and to avert or remove serious threats to international peace and security.

In view of this situation, Cyprus proposed some time ago the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly of an item on the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations. One can only hope that this effort by a country which has suffered so much may provide the focal point for effective remedial action.

It is not my intention to deal today with the various problems with which the United Nations is confronted. The position of Cyprus on all these problems is as well known as it has been consistent. I should only like to refer briefly to the problem of Cyprus, which, like many others, constitutes a typical example of utter disregard of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations by an aggressor who has for 11 years now been occupying by force a large part of the territory of our

(President Kyprianou)

country, a Member of the United Nations, and has been flagrantly and provocatively violating every human right and every principle and concept of international law. For 11 years now the perpetration and prolongation of a grave injustice at the expense of Cyprus has been tolerated. The victimizer remains unpunished, while the victim endures its terrible tragedy. Turkey does not hesitate to ignore every United Nations principle and resolution on Cyprus, confident that it will suffer no unpleasant consequences for its crime of invasion and that its open contempt for the United Nations will not cause it any practical damage.

(President Kyprianou)

The Cyprus problem must be of concern to the entire international community. It is wrong to judge its dimensions by the criterion of the country's smallness. The essence of the Cyprus problem is neither its dimensions nor the chances of its leading to a general conflagration. The Cyprus problem should be regarded as a question of principle, a question of aggression by a foreign country against an independent State, a question of the violation of all human rights, a question of the occupation of territory by another country, a question of the use of force against a defenceless people and, finally, a question of contempt, on the part of Turkey, for the United Nations.

The Assembly is well aware of what happened in Cyprus in 1974 as well as of the strenuous efforts to promote a solution to the problem in conformity with the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations. It is also well informed about the various steps we have taken throughout the past 11 years and the various far-reaching concessions we have made - which I am sure no Government represented here would have been willing to make if it had been faced with a similar situation - in our sincere desire to expedite the process towards a peaceful and viable solution. Yet the Cyprus problem still exists, although, with what we have offered, there is no justification at all for its existence. That must be the conclusion of all those who study the situation with objectivity.

It is not through pressure on the weak that a just and viable solution will be found, but only through strict adherence to the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations. Being the weak side, we have relied on the support of the United Nations, but the support we have had, for which we are grateful, has so far not been translated into effective action. It may be the easy way out to pressurize the weak side and make it yield, but is that the right way to solve international

(President Kyprianou)

problems, especially when the very principles of the United Nations are at stake? Is that the way the founders of the United Nations 40 years ago visualized the future?

Having said that, I repeat what I said earlier - that it is not the United Nations as an organization which is to blame. It is the lack of political will on the part of those who are in a position to make the United Nations effective which is to blame. In determining their attitude, the various Governments must set aside all other considerations and stick strictly to the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations. The problem of Cyprus is one of those problems which can easily be regarded as a test case for the future of the United Nations. I appeal once again to all Members to do whatever is possible, collectively and individually, to ensure the full implementation of the United Nations resolutions, and thus give real meaning to principles and declarations.

On our part, we shall continue to co-operate in absolute good faith with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, within the framework of the mission entrusted to him by the Security Council, and I take this opportunity to express to him our appreciation of his untiring efforts.

The problems in the Middle East, South Africa and the inhuman system of apartheid, Namibia and other similar problems also constitute real test cases for the possibilities and effectiveness of the United Nations. Put to the test also are the credibility and prestige of the United Nations, which has for 40 years used exhaustively, but without success, the method of recommendations. It must now take effective measures. If it avoids taking them, the same things will be said about the impotence and declining prestige of the United Nations if it survives yet another 40 years. But the world will be much worse off even than it is today.

There is no doubt that the United Nations must play a central role in international life, in an era of momentous changes and in a world continuously

(President Kyprianou)

moving away from moral values and principles, just at the moment when the interdependence of States abolishes boundaries and distances and unites peoples with the bonds of common destiny and common duty.

International peace and security, the happiness and welfare of the peoples of the world, will always be the most permanent and unquestionable interest of the international community. There is today, more than ever before, an imperative need to preserve and strengthen the United Nations as an organ for harmonizing actions of States and as an effective guardian of peace, freedom and justice in the world. There is today, more than ever before, an imperative need to restore the declining prestige of the United Nations. As you stressed, Mr. President, in your address to the General Assembly,

"It is hardly a secret that the United Nations is going through a crisis of prestige. The Organization has apparently not lived up to the hopes which the world placed in it when it was founded ..." (A/40/PV.1, p.12)

We have to make those words no longer apply. We have to prevent a repetition of them in the future.

The real meaning of this commemorative session is the universal realization of the historic need to review our policies and positions before we attempt to review the Charter. The experience of the 40-year life of the United Nations calls for a readjustment of our conceptions about the necessity for and usefulness of international institutions and makes it imperative for us all to make a fresh start in consolidating peace and justice and the happiness of all the peoples of our interdependent world. The United Nations should be reunited and renewed in order to be able to play its role effectively, and finally to justify its creation and existence.

(President Kyprianou)

On this auspicious occasion let us all rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter and at the same time express the political will to do nothing that is not consonant with them. If we translate those words into concrete action we shall turn the United Nations into the effective instrument for peace, freedom, security and justice that has been the dream of mankind for decades.

For our part, I wish to reiterate my country's unwavering adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. That is the message I convey and that is the promise I repeat on behalf of the people of Cyprus.

Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the President of the Republic of the Gambia, His Excellency Elhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara.

Elhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted to the rostrum.

President JAWARA: It is for me a great privilege to be able to participate in this commemoration of one of the most important achievements of human endeavour, namely, the establishment four decades ago of the United Nations. Such was our status at that historic juncture that the people of the Gambia were not represented among the 51 States which adopted the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945. Yet we were present in spirit. For we too had participated, to the extent that our resources permitted, in the heroic struggle against fascist oppression. And we too had seen our own youth respond to the call to arms and offer the supreme sacrifice to the cause of freedom. Thus, even before our emergence as a sovereign nation, we in the Gambia had demonstrated our firm attachment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. This commitment has remained unshakeable.

In the life of an international organization, two score years represent an appreciable span of time. This commemorative session thus provides an opportunity to distil the experience of the past four decades which have seen the United Nations evolve from infancy, through youth, to full maturity. As with all human endeavour, this growing process has encountered both successes and setbacks. Inevitably, also, the optimism which greeted the Organization's birth has given way to more realistic expectations.

Yet, despite the far-reaching changes which have radically transformed our planet since 1945, the peoples of the world have remained convinced of the need for an organization within whose fraternal context all nations, great and small, can participate, on a basis of sovereign equality, in the task of maintaining international order. This is an unquestionable triumph which has confounded those cynics who predicted that the United Nations would share the unfortunate destiny of its ill-fated predecessor, the League of Nations. There have also been a number of substantial achievements during this period, most notably in the area of

(President Jawara)

decolonization, and in the terms of standard-setting in the field of human rights, to which my Government attaches particular importance.

The United Nations was established amid the suffering and destruction wrought by the Second World War, to ensure that humanity would forever be spared any repetition of such horror. To this end, Member States formally renounced the use of force as a means of resolving their differences, undertaking instead to pursue the peaceful settlement of all disputes. At the same time, the provisions of the Charter offered assurances that any violation of these cardinal principles would be met by the prompt imposition of appropriate punitive sanctions by the Security Council, to which the maintenance of international peace and security was formally entrusted. For smaller, non-aligned nations such as the Gambia, which have followed with particular interest the practical operation of this collective security mechanism, the record has not been entirely reassuring.

On the one hand, is the irrefutable fact that since 1945, the world has been spared a direct military confrontation among the major Powers, although it remains uncertain whether this is attributable to the spirit of multilateralism or to the sobering prospect of mutually-assured destruction.

During this period, however, our world has been repeatedly shaken by the eruption of destructive regional conflicts in which Member States have ignored the provisions of the Charter and the general body of international law, and sought to advance their individual interests by resorting to force. Regrettably, in many such instances, the Security Council has been prevented by procedural and other obstacles from discharging its responsibilities under the Charter.

This has gravely undermined the authority and credibility of the United Nations, encouraging further breaches of international peace and security. The most recent acts of aggression committed by South Africa against Angola, and by Israel against Tunisia, are illustrative of this disturbing trend.

(President Jawara)

The Gambia deplores this state of affairs which, we consider, holds the most sinister implications for the security of small countries such as our own. Not blessed with strength, we rely upon the rule of law to guarantee our integrity and independence. But if that law is subverted by repeated unpunished violations, where are we to turn for protection? Are we also to join the wasteful arms race, diverting already scarce resources away from the pressing needs of our nation's social and economic development?

I should like to take this opportunity to touch briefly upon a few specific situations that are of particular concern to my Government. In South Africa, the systematic repression of the black majority by the apartheid régime has reached a new crescendo over the past year. The Gambia condemns this ruthless brutality which has spared neither religious leaders, workers, nor even schoolchildren. The racist régime must now be compelled, through the imposition of mandatory sanctions, to abandon apartheid and enter into substantive discussions with the authentic representatives of the majority population of South Africa. This is the only way to secure equal rights for the oppressed people of South Africa, whose just and heroic struggle my Government supports without equivocation.

The situation in neighbouring Namibia remains no less disturbing. Here, too, Pretoria has continued to defy successive resolutions of the Security Council, maintaining its illegal occupation of the territory, whose vast resources it continues to plunder with the collaboration of foreign economic interests.

As the sole legal administering authority for the territory, the United Nations bears a special responsibility towards the Namibian people. All efforts at persuasion having foundered on the rocks of South Africa's intransigence and duplicity, the United Nations must now resort to mandatory sanctions under the

(President Jawara)

Charter, to secure for the Namibian people, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), their sole authentic representative, the full enjoyment of their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence, in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

(President Jawara)

My Government is equally preoccupied by the unfolding Palestinian tragedy. Deprived of its homeland in order that others might have a territory to call their own, that people remains dispersed as refugees among a dozen countries in the Middle East. The Gambia supports without reservation the legitimate nationalist aspirations of the Palestinian people and remains convinced that their early satisfaction constitutes a sine qua non of the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Gambia is deeply saddened by the fratricidal hostilities between Iran and Iraq, which continue to threaten the unity of the Moslem Umma while seriously endangering international peace and security. Since July 1984 it has been my privilege to serve as Chairman of the Peace Committee established by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and charged with the task, in collaboration with the two parties, of finding a peace solution for that tragic conflict. While our endeavours are yet to be crowned with success, the Committee will spare no effort in the search for a just, honourable and lasting solution based on Islamic principles and international law.

At the same time the Gambia shares the agony of Afghanistan and Kampuchea, whose respective peoples continue to endure the yoke of foreign occupation. In this regard my Government has followed with close interest and supports the ongoing initiatives aimed at the political settlement of these crises. In particular we note with cautious optimism the evolution of the proximity talks being held in Geneva under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

With regard to the situation on the Korean peninsula, my Government supports the ongoing dialogue between the two sides and considers that their admission to the United Nations would enhance the prospects for their eventual reunification. This would also be in accordance with the principle of universality of our Organization.

(President Jawara)

The fortieth anniversary is being commemorated at a critical juncture in the evolution of international economic relations. Only a year ago, here in the General Assembly, developed and developing countries alike reviewed the world economic situation with cautious optimism and expressed the hope that the economic recovery that had begun in the major industrialized countries would spread to the rest of the world. Today we find that, sadly, this has not been the case.

The developing countries in general have remained hostage to the prolonged global recession of the past decade. The vast majority of those countries have continued to experience stagnation and even reversal in vital sectors of their economies. While commodity prices have eroded over the years, export earnings have diminished substantially, culminating in a situation of mounting indebtedness compounded by chronic balance-of-payments deficits. Furthermore, since many of the countries so affected belong to the category of the least developed countries, there has been a widespread erosion of living standards. This is particularly true of the least developed countries of Africa, where millions have remained trapped by the spectre of poverty, hunger and starvation in the wake of natural disasters precipitated by the current drought and increasing desertification. While domestic production has continued to decline substantially in most of those countries, population growth continues to outrun the food supply.

In the face of these overwhelming odds, developing countries in Africa have been compelled to adopt severe austerity programmes designed to diminish their mounting balance-of-payments deficits. It is regrettable, however, that such programmes have not succeeded in generating growth. While essential public services have been substantially reduced or even abandoned, domestic production and employment opportunities have declined significantly.

(President Jawara)

It is against this sombre background that we solemnly commemorate this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The Gambia, as one of the least developed countries in Africa, with a predominantly agricultural economy, has hitherto experienced more than a decade of continued poor agricultural performance, mainly as a result of the deleterious effects of a prolonged drought. Consequently my Government has recently embarked upon a series of policy reform and adjustment measures in co-operation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We recognize that the adjustment measures we have hitherto been pursuing can at best only arrest the negative trends in our economy. We have therefore launched an economic recovery programme geared not only to stabilization but also to recovery and growth. This further underscores the commitment of my Government to maintaining and improving the living standards of our people.

The need to address and improve the economic situation of developing countries is one of the most pressing of our time. It was only a few months ago that the 21st Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted a five-year priority programme to address the emergency, short, medium and long term problems of Africa.

While we acknowledge that the primary responsibility for attaining these objectives rests on our shoulders, our efforts need to be complemented by assistance from the international community. We therefore urge multilateral institutions, especially the World Bank and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, to channel the available resources for drought and famine relief and economic recovery within the framework of existing subregional and regional organizations. In this connection the river basin projects and intergovernmental development organizations, such as the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought

(President Jawara)

Control in the Sahel (CILSS), which are engaged in multilateral co-operation for the rehabilitation and improvement of agriculture and food production deserve priority.

May I at this juncture place on record the Gambia's deep appreciation of the generous and timely response to this crisis by the various organs and agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. May I also single out the current United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) campaign aimed at the complete immunization of all children by the year 1990.

It is clear that sustained economic and social progress can only be realised within the context of genuine international co-operation. It is equally clear that there is no more appropriate forum than the United Nations for the achievement of these objectives.

(President Jawara)

Let us therefore remind ourselves at this important juncture that the raison d'être of the United Nations is to make this world a better world - a safer, a saner and a more humane world for all mankind. The fortieth session is thus the occasion for us all to rededicate ourselves to the noble ideals and principles enshrined in the Charter, in a resurgence of the spirit of internationalism which inspired the founding of our Organization, 40 years ago. With our collective energies thus harnessed, I am persuaded that we can look forward with confidence to a more equitable and stable world.

I cannot conclude without paying a richly deserved tribute to the Government and people of the United States for the impressive arrangements which they have made to ensure the success of this historic session.

Elhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. M. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Ms. M. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted to the rostrum.

Ms. CHARLES (Dominica): We, as Members of this body, are happy to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its founding. This body was created to ensure that the nations of the world had a forum in which to discuss the world's problems. Underlying that action was the belief that while people were talking to each other the chances of fighting each other were remote.

We can congratulate ourselves on the fact that to date we have avoided another world war. But can we be justly satisfied when we look around the globe and see the numerous ongoing conflicts, which seem to have no end in spite of our numerous

(Ms. Charles, Dominica)

resolutions and attempts at conciliation? Can we truthfully say that our world is at peace when acts of terrorism are committed almost on a daily basis and the terrorists are treated as heroes and their victims as the persons who should bear the blame? Even more than in the period immediately preceding 1945, might seems to be equivalent to right. No, I think we should not only congratulate ourselves but we should use the attainment of this milestone as a time for reflection - a time to seek the answer to the question: where did we go wrong?

I am not an expert in the affairs of the United Nations; I am an infrequent attendant in these halls. But one telling experience I have undergone here illustrates to me that one of our faults is that we have ceased to listen to each other. It stands to reason that if we are to discuss our problems with the object of reaching a solution or consensus, then we must listen to what each Member has to say.

Two years ago when I was permitted to address the Security Council on the issue of the rescue operation in Grenada mounted at the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), I stayed on to hear two of the contributions which followed mine and noted that the speakers showed no interest - not even to the extent of a passing reference to what I had said. It was obvious to me that they had arrived at the meeting to make a point against an issue, and the issue itself was unimportant. Only the protagonists on each side of the issue were important. I left the building disillusioned. The United Nations Charter has meant a great deal to me. As a student in law at the time of its creation I had followed with avid interest the debates on and the plans for the formation of the United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is enshrined in my mind and is the foundation of all my thinking and the pillar on which many of my aspirations rest. I carry with me a copy of the final authorized text at all times.

(Ms. Charles, Dominica)

As I proceeded that day in 1983 from this building to the airport to travel back to my troubled part of the world, I thought to myself: is that the august body in which members with diverse views can discuss coolly, calmly and dispassionately, and with a real desire to reach understanding of the issues and solutions to the problems? I was saddened by the suspicion that the oft-repeated phrase that the United Nations is merely a talk shop might be merited, that perhaps our Organization, in which we had placed such high hopes in 1945, was failing to adhere to the high ideals on which it was founded. I was chastened by the thought that the United Nations had become an organization in which everyone speaks but no one listens. I was concerned to note that no issue is discussed within the context of the issue itself but that any debate can be utilized to discuss matters which have no bearing on the issue at hand, to reiterate entrenched positions. I realized that within the United Nations there were united subgroupings which prevented the Organization from operating as intended - a forum for free and frank and fearless discussion; that peace for all times was no longer the objective but, rather, scores to be settled against an opponent or in favour of an ally.

To a small country this trend is disadvantageous. Too small and too unimportant, no doubt, in the eyes of the larger and more developed countries, to be an effective member of any subgrouping, our voice does not count for much in this Organization of what should be united nations - united against tyranny, united for freedom and justice, united in a spirit of brotherhood. Can we, small as we are, seek to make our fellow Members realize that all the rhetoric uttered on the desirability of world peace will not bring peace until the eradication of prejudices and inequalities - both of which are often apparent in the treatment of us, the smaller countries.

(Ms. Charles, Dominica)

If we are representative of all the nations of the world, can we justify the absence of the Republic of Korea from our midst? Without the assistance of this body the Republic of Korea has pursued a line of patient and sincere negotiations with its northern neighbour in the hope that a peaceful settlement of the Korean question can be reached so that at least in one area of the globe there can be a reduction of tensions. This action is exactly in keeping with the hopes of our Organization and I would urge that we arrive at an early settlement of the membership status of the Republic of Korea.

Article 2 of our Declaration of Human Rights is completely ignored by South Africa. In recent months we have seen the escalation of violence in that country, and we cannot permit this to continue. Let those who can validly do so impose sanctions. We in my country did so many years ago, but I doubt whether South Africa even knows of our existence. It would appear to me that a complete shut-down of that country - its isolation - is the only measure that might bring an end to the despicable system of apartheid imposed in South Africa. But since such a measure would, in the short term, hurt the persons to whom we are seeking to bring relief, the request for such severe measures would have to come from the oppressed people in South Africa and neighbouring countries. Such action would also have the advantage of settling the age-old question of Namibia.

The three areas in which I have proposed action by the nations of the world represent but a few of the many problems needing attention by the United Nations. At the same time, by continuing to refer to them to the General Assembly we realize and acknowledge thereby that without this Organization there is a great deal that would not have been achieved in the past 40 years, and that there is a great deal left to be done by us.

The agencies of the United Nations have assisted our developing countries. Often, we would not have been able to carry on with promoting the welfare of our people without that assistance. But I must repeat here - for it bears repetition - what I have said in many other international forums, namely, that the technical assistance given us must be accomplished by, first, suitable training of our own people in order to enable us eventually to do without such technical assistance and, secondly, a programme which enables us to compete in the market for the services of our persons so trained. Yes, there is a great deal left to be done by us.

It is for that reason that I say that, in spite of our shortcomings, the fortieth anniversary of our coming into being is cause for real celebration. For by

(Ms. Charles, Dominica)

this successful completion of such a period of endeavour we indicate that we are dedicated to making the ideals on which our Organization is founded flourish in our midst.

All I ask is that we be "United" Nations, for justice and the future peace and stability of our world.

In thanking you, Mr. President, for the arrangements permitting me to address this session, I wish also to congratulate you on your election to the post of President of the General Assembly. It is a signal honour conferred on you during this fortieth commemorative anniversary, and one which you enhance in carrying out your duties so ably.

Ms. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency Dr. El Gizouli Daf'Alla.

Mr. El Gizouli Daf'Alla, Prime Minister of the Demoratic Republic of the Sudan, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. DAF'ALLA (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of this memorable session of the General Assembly, an election which reflects the recognition of your capabilities and long diplomatic experience. It is also an honour for your friendly country, which is linked to the Sudan, its people and Government, by the closest ties, a country known for its pioneering role in serving the noble principles and purposes of the United Nations.

The establishment of the United Nations was an important historical event in the development of human relations and a decisive turning-point in the history of joint collective action. With the signing of the United Nations Charter,

(Mr. Daf'Alla, Sudan)

international relations entered an advanced stage based on a reservoir of experience shared by nations and peoples. It reflected the determination of the international community to explore the horizons of a future which would put its faith in co-operation and renounce wars. It is also incumbent upon us, on the occasion of this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, to take stock of our achievements, the difficulties of the past and of the present, and of our aspirations for the future.

The Sudan is taking part in this historic session following the achievement of a major victory by its people last April, namely, the overthrow of the régime which had been oppressing it for the previous 16 years. That régime had created a number of internal and external problems as a result of its policies, brought about the collapse of our domestic economy, exposed the unity of the country to fragmentation and made us incapable of playing our rightful role in foreign policy.

The revolutionary Government has established the following priorities: to return the Sudan to democratic rule, to enshrine the concept of democracy, to build national unity, to solve all problems by dialogue and to deal with the critical economic situation. From the very beginning of our glorious people's revolution our country has always affirmed its faith in the principles of the United Nations, its respect for human rights and its adherence to international and regional instruments, as well as its respect for the independence and territorial sovereignty of all States, non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring States, the solution of all problems and disputes by peaceful means, and the promotion of regional and international joint co-operation.

As the world celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Sudan reaffirms its unswerving commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and its conviction that the Charter remains the best possible framework for the codification, organization and practice of international

(Mr. Daf'Alla, Sudan)

co-operation in the political, economic and social spheres and for the promotion and support of such co-operation. As we say this, we have before us a living example of the continued effectiveness of the United Nations, namely, its role in mobilizing and co-ordinating assistance from the international community for us and other African countries to mitigate the consequences of famine, drought and desertification. As we have already mentioned, the United Nations has demonstrated that, if entrusted with the necessary support and confidence, it is capable of fulfilling its role in accordance with the aspirations of the Charter.

(Mr. Daf'Alla, Sudan)

We should like to reaffirm our appreciation of the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, as well as other United Nations organizations and agencies in support of efforts by us and other African countries to surmount the present crisis. We hope that this assistance will be extended to include African efforts directed towards rehabilitation and development. In this regard, we wish to commend the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in helping the health authorities in the Sudan in their campaign to immunize children, which all hospitals and health centres in urban and rural areas are now implementing within the framework of the international effort to achieve total immunization by 1990.

Forty years in the life of the United Nations and its peoples constitute only a brief interval in history and the Organization is entitled to take pride in what it has achieved over that period. Its membership has grown from 51 to 159 States, no nuclear war has occurred and there has not been a third world war. The Organization's decolonization and the containment of many minor conflicts, as well as in peace-keeping operations, disarmament and the promotion of international law, is undeniable.

The efforts of the specialized agencies have confirmed the cohesion of the nations of our world and have shown that questions of development, food, the environment, health, the seas, water resources, communications, meteorology, refugees, the battle against narcotics, crime prevention and other issues cannot be addressed by a single State or group of States, whatever their capabilities. They have also shown that this world cannot be administered or controlled by one State or group of States. Multilateral co-operation is thus a necessity for the sake of the peace, progress and future of our world.

It is with pride that we enumerate the achievements of our international Organization. We do not deny, however, that it has failed to fulfil many of our

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aspirations. Perhaps the most obvious examples of its inadequacy can be seen in its inability to bring about independence and sovereignty for the peoples of Namibia and Palestine, to put an end to the policy of apartheid practised against the African people of South Africa and to curb the conventional and nuclear arms race. Among the reasons for its failure may be that some States Members of the United Nations are more concerned with their own interests than with those of the international community, or that they do not adhere to the provisions and principles of the United Nations Charter, or that certain super-Powers ignore the Organization and try to create solutions to some problems outside the framework of the United Nations.

I am certain that the purposes of the Charter still constitute a sound basis for the treatment of world issues, the maintenance of international peace and security and the establishment of the new international economic order. Our commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Organization and the presence of so many Heads of State and Government on this occasion are a reaffirmation of their desire for peace and their determination to help the United Nations achieve its goals.

Furthermore, we are inclined to believe that the United Nations General Assembly must take this opportunity to concentrate its attention during the remainder of this century on a vision for the future by drawing up plans and programmes for the achievement of specific goals in economic, social and humanitarian matters and in disarmament up to the year 2000 and beyond, in the same manner as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have made specific plans with clear-cut targets.

While we praise the endeavours and dedication of the present Secretary-General and his predecessors in supporting this Organization, we believe that the

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Secretary-General could play a major role in improving the performance of the United Nations and in the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Articles 98 and 99 of the United Nations Charter. In this context, we support the remarks made by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization concerning the development of the Secretary-General's capacity, to make, in particular, wider and earlier use of fact-finding and observer missions.

Our commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of this Organization coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). It is truly regrettable, however, that the current situation in Namibia and South Africa constitutes a grave threat to the security of the African continent and to international peace and security owing to South Africa's intransigence and its refusal to implement United Nations resolutions and declarations. The continuance of the policy of apartheid, which the United Nations has declared a crime against humanity, and the ugly crimes to which the people of South Africa are subjected at the hands of the racist Government - killings, repression, banishment and imprisonment - and which accompanied the declaration of the state of emergency make it incumbent upon the international community to step up its support for the people of South Africa in order to enable that people to put an end to the policy of apartheid and to provide immediate assistance to the people of Namibia in the restoration of their independence and sovereignty under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and its leader, Sam Nujoma.

At the same time, the United Nations is facing a grave challenge in the Middle East because of Israel's aggressive, racist and expansionist policy, its disdain for the resolutions of the United Nations and its recalcitrance with regard to the

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will of the international community. Israel's acts of aggression against Lebanon and the Iraqi nuclear reactor and its recent acts of aggression against Tunisia and the Palestine Liberation Organization underscore the gravity of the crimes it has committed, its violation of the United Nations Charter and the threat it poses to peace and security in the region and in the world.

The Assembly has reaffirmed on numerous occasions that the question of Palestine is the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without Israel's full and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on its national soil under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, international efforts must be intensified on this important occasion to make Israel implement the resolutions of the United Nations and to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian people in order to enable that people to continue waging its just war for the attainment of sovereignty and independence.

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The momentum of the arms race and of the related expenditure has increased perceptibly in recent years, and has extended to some of the developing countries as well. This threatens international peace and security; therefore, the achievement of complete disarmament must be in the forefront of the concerns of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole. This matter assumes the utmost importance in the light of the current balance of nuclear terror. We note here the increased production and stockpiling of nuclear and conventional weapons and the growth of their destructive capacity. At the same time, spending on weapons is steadily increasing: total annual expenditures amount to \$1,000 billion, money which could be used in the economic and social fields and to combat poverty and natural disasters, particularly in the developing countries. Another point is that in order to break the vicious circle of the arms race and to create a world in which peace and stability prevail, the system of collective security provided for in the Charter of the Organization must be retained as a major, basic option.

One of the most important challenges facing the United Nations, now and for the future, concerns the promotion of economic and social development efforts in the countries of the world, particularly the developing countries. During the four decades of the life of the Organization there has been a continuing concentration on economic, social and cultural questions. Such activities account for approximately 75 per cent of the Organization's regular budget, and their scope has expanded to cover all aspects of economic and social life.

However, the diversity of the activities of the United Nations and its fine record of achievement in the economic, social and cultural fields must not lead us to underestimate the magnitude of the challenge facing our international Organization and the need to fulfil the great hopes our peoples place in it. That

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challenge, with its social and political content, constitutes one of the basic elements that can contribute to world peace, stability and progress.

During its short life, the United Nations has endeavoured to deal with a variety of economic problems, such as the problems of the environment, desertification, new and renewable sources of energy, population, and the problems of the least developed countries. Since last year it has concentrated particularly on the grave economic crisis in Africa. We hope that at the current session the Assembly will pay special attention to the debt problem now threatening not only the economies of the developing countries but the very survival of many of their societies. Sudan, a country that is both African and among the least developed, is confronting a debt of vast proportions that it is incapable of repaying, notwithstanding its undertaking to meet its obligations in that connection. That debt threatens its democratic system and renders its development efforts futile. Moreover, the debt problem of the developing countries, and the African debt problem in particular, is not susceptible of any fundamental solutions except through an international dialogue on the question and a united effort leading to new and innovative solutions that take account of the economic, social and political circumstances in the debtor countries as well as their ability to service and repay their debts. In the case of African debts, such solutions must include total or partial cancellation of official debts, or their conversion into grants. At the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, held recently at Seoul, we noted a new tendency on the part of the developed countries to deal in a different way with the debt crisis of the developing countries and the indebtedness of Africa and the least developed countries. We hope that this may lead to the desired solutions.

One of the greatest human tragedies the world has witnessed in recent years is the steady increase in the flow of refugees and in the numbers of people forced to

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leave their homelands and flee elsewhere in search of security, stability and food. For three decades or more, the Sudan has given asylum to the large numbers of refugees forced for numerous reasons to emigrate to our country. The Sudan has complied with international and regional conventions and laws governing the question of refugees of all types and categories. I wish to reaffirm the declaration of the Transitional Government of the Sudan that we shall continue to honour our humanitarian and moral commitments towards refugees who come to our country, in spite of the material and social burden they represent for us. While we appreciate the international community's support for what we are doing to aid refugees, we consider it essential that efforts be intensified to arrive at lasting solutions to the root causes of the refugee problem. At the same time, we consider it essential that aid to refugees be linked to development efforts in the areas affected by this problem.

We must emphasize in our commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations that this international body will remain an essential instrument, indispensable for the safeguard of international peace and irreplaceable in the fostering of international co-operation. This world Organization has averted wars and devastation. The twentieth century could not have avoided a third world war in recent years had it not been for the United Nations and our unanimous commitment to its purposes and principles. We in the Sudan believe that the world is in urgent need of this Organization, just as it was 40 years ago, and that we must all hold fast to it in order to enable it to establish international peace and collective co-operation on firm foundations.

Mr. El Gizouli Daf'Alla, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister of Grenada, The Honourable Herbert A. Blaize.

Mr. Herbert A. Blaize, Prime Minister of Grenada, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. BLAIZE (Grenada): First let me thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the General Assembly and to congratulate you on your election as its President, as well as to affirm my confidence in your ability to direct its affairs to productive conclusions.

I speak on behalf of a people and country which have recently been traumatized by the most callous and bloody episode in the modern political history of the Caribbean region. Grenada has suffered, and continues to suffer dearly, from almost two decades of ugly political power play, much to the detriment of the economic and social progress of our people. During that time dictatorial and unconstitutional régimes denied our people serious opportunities for individual advancement and the exercise of their basic human rights. Our country's Constitution was habitually violated and was eventually hijacked by force of arms in 1979.

That latter development finally led to a week of indescribable horror and chaos in October 1983, when, after shocking killings and other injury, the whole country was placed under virtual house arrest by means of a 24-hour curfew, with the threat of people being shot on sight if found outside their homes.

In those circumstances, friendly States were invited to restore law and order and to rescue our people from the grip of an alien ideology which had shown no respect for human life and for its political preferences and democratic values. I wish to announce that the military forces of those friendly States have been totally and fully withdrawn, and that Grenada's security is once more the responsibility of the Royal Grenada Police Force.

In the meantime, sufficient stability returned to Grenada to permit the people to select a Government of its choice in free and fair elections in December 1984. The will of the majority of the Grenadian people favoured a return to constitutional rule and parliamentary democracy. My Government is now busy trying to consolidate those democratic gains and to maintain law and order. We are about

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to reintroduce a system of local government throughout the State which will provide opportunities for genuine participation in the political process. A Constitution Review Commission is soon to complete its work, and it is anticipated that some of its recommendations will further democratize the political system.

My country's economic and political circumstances, as they have evolved, dictate to my Government and people perceptions of history and events which are at times contradictory and discouraging. But we believe that to despair is to deny the positive role which social and political institutions can play in world and domestic affairs. The Government of Grenada is, however, aware that the mere physical or symbolic presence of international organizations cannot be sufficient to give effect to their valid potential for mediation, peace and progress. We believe that these organizations have to be empowered by Member States to realize the bold ideals to which we often pay glowing tribute in our opening lines, and which are subsequently vitiated by tactical manoeuvrings and a regular absence of political will.

On the auspicious occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, my delegation wishes to associate itself and the people of Grenada with the sincere expressions of support for the work of the United Nations which many representatives before me have pledged. We in Grenada recognize the United Nations as still the central instrument for world peace and security through co-operation internationally.

Indeed, the founders expected this to be so when they proclaimed at the beginning of the Charter their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

In this, the fortieth year of its existence, we confidently look to see the United Nations fulfil these laudable dreams. To countless millions of Christian and Judaic people throughout the world the number 40 has significant meaning. It

(Mr. Blaize, Grenada)

was for 40 days and 40 nights that the rains fell which deluged Noah's ark. The Israelites wandered for 40 years in the wilderness towards the land of their promise. Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights in preparation for his public ministry, and after his resurrection he remained with his Apostles for 40 days, which provided a period of joy and enlightenment for his followers. In more modern times the great American Benjamin Franklin wrote:

"At twenty, the will in a man prevails; at thirty, the wit. But at forty, the judgement of maturity."

It is in this billowing maturity of 40 years of hard experience that we expect the United Nations effectively to attain the goals of the 1945 Charter.

But to satisfy the Charter's high hopes for humanity the United Nations must come to grips with some fundamental realities. Although the world may never be fully free from instances of injustice, it must certainly be recognized that there can be no lasting peace where injustice is institutionalized. There must, therefore, be urgent, united action to rid South Africa of the scourge of apartheid and minority rule, and to bring independence to Namibia.

Towards the pursuit of world peace we are pleased to note that an International Year of Peace is to be proclaimed on 24 October. Grenada will contribute to the voluntary fund, and will appoint a high-level committee to set up educational and cultural programmes in observance of the Year.

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In the speech from the throne of December 1984 it was declared that "Grenada is committed to work relentlessly in support of the peace-keeping role of the United Nations".

More recently, in St. Kitts, we joined with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Foreign Ministers in a call for the international community to strengthen their commitment to the multilateral process and, in particular, to make greater use of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to resolve international problems.

The Government of Grenada views with grave concern the continued escalation of tension in Central America. Developments in that region constitute a menace to international peace and security. We call upon all States in that region to pursue a negotiated settlement to all issues in the context of the framework proposed by the Contadora group.

Grenada considers it a most pressing responsibility for the world's Powers to take concrete steps towards a de-escalation of the arms race in both nuclear and conventional arms. The people of Grenada, and indeed of the developing world, have a direct interest in an immediate reduction in the quantum of resources currently invested in this unproductive and dangerous venture.

The Government of Grenada views the situation as requiring collective action of the most resolute kind and calls upon all States to commit themselves to an immediate settlement of these issues.

Who can deny the urgent need to arrive at a just settlement in the Middle East, one which respects the right of all States to exist within secure and recognized boundaries?

As I have noted, the founders of the Charter reaffirmed their faith in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. Today the emphasis on small nations has immense relevance. The United Nations has come a long way

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since 1945, with a membership today more than three times the original membership of 51. A large percentage of this increase comprises small nations which were not even conceived of in 1945. Yet they now form a significant reality in the world community of today. Special measures are needed to assist these small countries in overcoming the difficulties which derive from insularity and smallness. Apart from their vulnerability as small States, they also face severe problems of political and economic issues. Among the things which can be done to assist is to prevail upon the World Bank to refrain from the unrealistic attempt to "graduate" most of them out of the facilities of the International Development Agency (IDA) soft window for developmental funds.

Very important to these small States is the 1979 decision by the General Assembly to launch a round of "global and sustained ... co-operation for development", which should "include major issues in the field of raw materials, energy, trade, development, money and finance" (General Assembly resolution 34/138, paras. 1 and 2 (b)) in pursuit of a new international economic order.

Although an ad hoc Committee of the Whole has been conducting these meetings and consultations, and the positions of developing countries are being asserted in the Group of 77, no tangible results have emerged so far.

In this connection the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Barbados last July called for "effective global consultation on all major international conferences on financial and monetary measures". Grenada was a party to this call and it urges this fortieth session of the General Assembly to give effect to it.

On the question of youth involvement in decision-making, I wish to report that a National Committee has been appointed in Grenada to support measures to promote the programmes related to the International Youth Year.

(Mr. Blaize, Grenada)

With regard to the issues concerning women, follow-up is expected on the Conference to Review the Decade of Women, held recently in Nairobi. In Grenada, women are considered important for the formulation of policies concerning the country. Out of seven Permanent Secretaries to the seven ministries in the present Government, four of them are women. Two of the seven Parliamentary Secretaries are women, as is the Secretary to the Cabinet.

I should like to end by referring to a problem which is of increasing concern throughout the world, namely, the increased traffic in and abuse of narcotics. Grenada will therefore support regional and international measures to address the drug problem for the health and welfare of its people. May God guide us all in our endeavours to make this world clean and healthy for young and old alike.

Mr. Herbert Blaize, Prime Minister of Grenada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Special Envoy of the Head of State of the Republic of Guatemala, His Excellency Mr. Arturo Fajardo-Maldonado.

Mr. FAJARDO-MALDONADO (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): It is an honour for me to read out a message from the Head of State of Guatemala, General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, addressed to the representatives attending the fortieth session of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. The text of the message is as follows:

"In my capacity as Head of State of Guatemala, since it is impossible for me to attend in person the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, I have the honour to convey a message of peace and solidarity from the people of Guatemala, which I have the honour to represent and which, in the final analysis, is, and should be, the true beneficiary of the efforts and achievements of our supreme world Organization.

"This commemorative session offers us an opportunity to examine, calmly and with objectivity, not only the results of our Organization's work but, even more important, the prospects of strengthening the system of multilateral co-operation in an increasingly interdependent world.

"When the Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco 40 years ago its founding fathers had in mind a model organization that would guarantee peace and security among all nations. They included in the Charter the basic norms that were to become the corner-stone of general international law. The Charter's provisions were intended to safeguard collective security, justice and human rights and in general to promote social and economic progress, to enable all peoples of the world to obtain a worthy standard of living. The basic ideal at that time was the establishment of a world body that would encourage co-operation between the great Powers as well as friendly relations among all nations.

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"The realization of those lofty purposes of the world Organization depended on the ability of the major victors and former Allies in the Second World War to co-operate. Unfortunately, that balance of power, so indispensable to international peace has been adversely affected by the rivalries and antagonisms between the major Powers. Co-operation and understanding have not been sufficiently furthered. Political and ideological polarization has increased, making it very difficult in the long term for the United Nations to become the motive of a peaceful and stable world. We have not had a third world conflagration, but we have experienced a considerable number of local or regional wars and conflicts.

"The world of today is not the same as the world of 1945. There have been major changes and these have been reflected in the functioning of the United Nations. The colonial system has virtually disappeared, giving way to the emergence of new sovereign, independent States that are today part of the Organization. This considerable increase in its membership is the best tribute to the efforts of the United Nations in its struggle against colonialism. Most of the new States are developing countries, which are endeavouring to improve the living conditions of their peoples and to bring about a fairer system of international economic relations.

"Guatemala belongs to the community of developing countries, and it, too, is interested in overcoming the obstacles to a better standard of living for its people. There is no doubt that the United Nations is for us the

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appropriate framework of international co-operation within which to contribute to and strengthen the internal efforts of Governments and peoples to resolve their difficulties. For us, the Organization represents more achievements and benefits than failures. That is why we shall continue to play an active part in the promotion of the understanding, well-being and harmony we all desire. It is important for third-world countries to strengthen their presence and their voice in the United Nations. Above all, they should reaffirm their solidarity with each other through South-South co-operation, especially through their major achievements at the regional and subregional levels. In this connection my country is proud of its commitment to maintain its tradition of integration with its brothers in Central America.

"Interdependence is an irrevocable feature of today's world and the industrialized countries are aware of this. We are convinced that the United Nations is a unique instrument for the promotion of understanding between the developing countries and the more advanced countries, since, in an increasingly fragmented world participation in a multilateral system of co-operation is possible only if there is complementarity and not antagonism or exclusivity. Whatever our potential or our size, we all have a great deal to give and a great deal to lose. Guatemala will continue to contribute with optimism to the strengthening of the Organization, which, at the cost of so much sacrifice by mankind, has been able to exist and survive for four decades now, and which, despite its limitations, has been able to chart new and significant courses in the scientific, humanitarian, technological, social, economic, cultural, conceptual and practical fields.

"With a pessimistic or negative approach, it is easier to criticize the United Nations for its mistakes and failures than to recognize and list its achievements. But its shortcomings and weaknesses should not be

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expressed in terms of hostility to or lack of enthusiasm for the Organization, nor should its work be minimized or its efforts disregarded.

"In this regard the mass media have a great contribution to make by informing public opinion of the difficult task that has been entrusted to our Organization, which, as a human enterprise, is a reflection of the political will of its Member States. We must not forget that ultimately the peoples are the true Members of the United Nations and that the challenge consists in making the best possible use of the opportunity provided by the fortieth anniversary of its Foundation to rethink the future of relations between the Organization and the peoples of the world."

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.