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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 7 November 1985, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Vice-President)	(Pakistan)
later:	Mr. DE PINIÉS (President)	(Spain)
later:	Mr. MAKEKA (Vice-President)	(Lesotho)
later:	Mr. MARINESCU (Vice-President)	(Romania)

- Programme of work
- Critical economic situation in Africa: report of the Secretary-General [30]

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Vice-President,
took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before the Assembly continues its consideration of item 30 I should like to make an announcement regarding the programme of work for next week.

On Monday, 11 November, in the morning the Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 146, "Solemn appeal to States in conflict to cease armed action forthwith and to settle disputes between them through negotiations, and to States Members of the United Nations to undertake to solve situations of tension and conflict and existing disputes by political means and to refrain from the threat or use of force and from any intervention in the internal affairs of other States. It will also take up item 27, "International Year of Peace". In the afternoon of the same day, the Assembly will begin its consideration of item 28, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

(The President)

On Wednesday, 13 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will begin the plenary meetings which have been designated as "The United Nations World Conference for International Youth Year", and which concern item 89, "International Youth Year: participation, development, peace".

AGENDA ITEM 30 (continued)

CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(A/40/372-E/1983/104 and Add.1 and 2)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution has been submitted under this item and will be circulated this afternoon. The draft resolution has programme budget implications, and the voting on it will therefore take place at a subsequent meeting to be announced in the Journal.

Mr. LI Luye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to thank the Secretary-General and the representative of Senegal, who made an introductory statement on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Their statements, along with the relevant reports of the Secretariat and of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, have brought to our attention the enormous work done by the United Nations system in assisting the afflicted African countries, as well as the response of the international community to the situation in Africa. We have thus acquired a better understanding of the trends of development in that continent.

A year ago we unanimously adopted the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa. Since then there has emerged a global campaign for assistance to Africa. Thanks to the efforts of the African countries themselves and the assistance provided internationally, as well as some improvement in climatic conditions, there are signs of alleviation of the situation in Africa, signs that are an encouragement to us all.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

However, as has been pointed out by the second special memorandum of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and echoed by some other reports, although the economic situation in some countries has improved to a certain extent, in others it is continuing to worsen. There remains the shortage of food, medical equipment and daily necessities badly needed by the afflicted populations. Tens of millions of displaced persons driven by natural calamities are still struggling against malnutrition, disease and even death. Agricultural production is yet to be fully restored. Food output has continued to drop. Energy and transportation are lacking, as they always have been. Furthermore, the debt servicing burden of African countries has grown to an extent far beyond what the African Governments can cope with. In a word, the crisis is not yet under control and the critical problems remain unresolved.

As is correctly pointed out in the special memorandum adopted by the Tenth Conference of Ministers of ECA, Africa faces a two-fold challenge: survival and development.

Owing to prolonged colonial rule, African countries have been suffering severe imbalances in their basic economic structures. Their single-product economies, their over-dependence on foreign markets and lack of infrastructure have made them extremely vulnerable to the adverse effects of outside conditions. Any disturbance in the international economy will make them suffer first and most. The present crisis has fully underlined such structural deficiencies. In order to help Africa rid itself of economic difficulties, it is imperative not only to try to solve its immediate problems but also to aim at medium and long-term economic and social development and to carry out structural reforms so that Africa can gradually build up its own capability of self-reliant production and immunity to natural disasters. The Lagos Plan of Action is exactly such a prospective plan. Last

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

summer leaders of African countries once again discussed in earnest all the related issues in Addis Ababa and adopted a five-year priority programme for the development of the African economy. This further shows the determination of the African countries not only to cope effectively with the present crisis but also to seek long-term and fundamental solutions to their economic problems.

The African Governments have stated that responsibility for the rehabilitation and development of their economies rests mainly with the African countries themselves. However, in view of their multitude of problems and the magnitude of their task of removing the root causes of crisis situations, the African countries will not be able to succeed alone. Africa's emergency situation cries out for help from the international community, and Africa's medium and long-term economic development also needs generous international support. While continuing to provide emergency assistance, the international community should actively support the efforts of African countries to restore and step up their agricultural production, to build up and improve their infrastructure and to readjust and reform their economic structures. First and foremost, it is necessary to create a favourable external climate for them by removing the constraints imposed on their economies by unjust international relations. That would include stabilizing the prices of raw materials and primary products, improving their terms of trade, increasing concessional aid for development to the least-developed countries and settling their debt problems in the light of the specific conditions of African countries. The international community should also provide them with adequate financial, material and technical assistance for speedy realization of the objectives set forth by the Transport and Communication Decade in Africa and the Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

The Chinese Government and people have always sympathized with the African people in their unfortunate experiences and their grave difficulties, and are very much concerned with developments in that continent. From the time when the Secretary-General made his appeal concerning the critical situation in Africa up until the end of June of this year, China donated 170,000 tons of grain to the afflicted African countries and arranged for its delivery. My Government has also contributed to and is executing seven projects under the FAO restoration plan.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

In addition, the National Committee of the Red Cross of China, having contributed \$680,000-worth of food, medicine and other materials in 1984, is launching a nation-wide campaign for more donations. We will continue to support African countries' efforts to overcome their difficulties and develop their economies.

My Government supports the proposal of the summit meeting of the OAU for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the economic situation in Africa. In view of the present situation, the convening of such a session would provide a desirable forum for comprehensive and effective discussions on the fundamental issues relating to the medium-term and long-term development of Africa.

Africa, with its abundant human and natural resources, has broad prospects for development. The African countries are at present individually or collectively taking measures to accomplish the dual task of meeting their immediate needs and promoting medium-term and long-term development. Many of them are readjusting their policies and formulating development strategies and plans in the light of their own specific conditions. We are confident that, with powerful international support and through their own hard work, African countries will surely reverse the present trend of the situation and turn Africa into a continent of vitality and prosperous development.

Mr. LEWIS (Canada): The emergency in Africa is not over. In spite of the arrival of bountiful rains in some areas and the harvesting of bumper crops, countless numbers of Africans are still starving or hungry or malnourished. There is still misery. Famine still stalks many lands. The situation now is vastly better than it was one year ago, but much more must yet be done.

At incomparable human cost the world has learned some lessons since the start of the African emergency. Let us resolve that they will not be forgotten and that hereafter we will put in place a series of responses, policies and programmes which, collectively, will make an equivalent catastrophe impossible.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

Canada believes that, while the emergency remains the imperative, we must increasingly emphasize follow-up measures for the international community so that a rehabilitation programme can be established with two major long-term goals: to help Africa better anticipate and better manage any future emergency situations; and to put Africa on an economic path that will reverse the continent's recent decline and ensure that sustained development is achieved for the future.

These two goals will be achieved only by an immediate and prolonged commitment of resources accompanied by extensive policy changes and close co-ordination between the international community and African countries. The task is daunting. It requires single-minded political will over a very long haul.

The African emergency has had a stunning impact on the world. It has restored the milk of human kindness to even the most obdurate of cynics. It has brought a massive global outpouring of emergency assistance to Africa. The international system has shown that it can respond with speed, compassion and generosity. In food aid alone, during 1984-1985 donor countries will have shipped an estimated 11.7 million tonnes of cereals to Africa. To put it in stark relief, food aid to sub-Saharan Africa will account for one half of total cereal imports and one sixth of total cereal production in the region. What more morose statistics are necessary to illustrate the impact of drought on agricultural production - and it is not made a great deal better simply because it demonstrates the strong support of the world community.

Agriculture is, however, only one facet of the critical situation in Africa. The emergency's more lasting effect has been to dramatize and exacerbate already serious economic problems and drastically to constrain economic development. Overall, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), as representatives will know, calculates that total output per capita in the continent dropped 10 per cent from 1980 to 1984, and per capita food production is now only 94 per cent of what it was

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

10 years ago. One could be clinical about it and note antiseptically that this lack of real growth in output obviously has adverse consequences for the balance of payments and greatly accelerates the accumulation of debt. One could equally be emotional about it and note that the figures constitute a monumental economic calamity.

Without any inclination to moral preachifying, it is necessary to acknowledge that the root causes implicate us all. Whether it be misguided domestic policies, low rates of investment rates, in particular in agriculture, poor management, high interest rates, or stagnant world commodity trade, the breakdown in Africa's primary economic underpinnings has greatly added to the tragedy. The challenge for corrective action is to reverse the decline in total output and deal realistically - some would say courageously - with all these interlocking economic problems.

Our immediate goals in addressing the African crisis should be early recovery and the establishment of a foundation for longer-term development. That goes without saying. Early recovery means, among other things, taking advantage of the current good rains by providing tools and fertilizers as well as increased food storage capacity. Longer-term development requires a co-ordinated response to bridge the transition from emergency to security. A number of useful suggestions have been made by various groups, including the International Development Research Centre in Canada, the summit Group of Experts on the African emergency and the Commonwealth.

Perhaps I could highlight sensible and relevant measures as follows: first, improving and integrating the early warning systems of various multilateral agencies and African countries; secondly, strengthening the response system for emergencies through better management based on the hard lessons learned today; thirdly, striving for truly effective co-operation between donors and development

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

agencies on the one hand and the Governments and peoples of Africa on the other; fourthly, integrating food aid with national food production policies; and, fifthly, utilizing resettlement packages and other innovative direct assistance strategies to provide immediate assistance to those most in need.

The goals of helping Africa better to manage future emergencies and to reverse declining development are not difficult to state. To attain them however will require Herculean efforts and unprecedented resources over the long term. The international community knows its responsibilities, but when all is said and done the major effort and resources must be found in Africa. No continent can live by aid alone. Which resources are we talking about? Quite simply, environmental, financial, policy and co-ordination. All of them exist indigenously and must be exploited imaginatively. Let us examine them more fully for a moment.

First, environmental resources obviously refer to soil, water, grasslands and forests. This is the great inheritance of Africa and it is being devastated in the short term. The result is desertification, increased severity of droughts, unplanned population movements and lower crop yields. The degradation of the rural environment is the result of an imbalance between human activities and the environment itself, not to mention the low priority accorded the rural sector in most African economies.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

African countries and international donors must pay more attention to the environment at both the regional and project levels. At this moment in time, as representatives know, there is a conference in Dakar on desertification, and there is also the report of the Group of Experts on Aid to Africa appointed by the Bonn Economic Summit, which proposes a similar conference to be held in Paris in February 1986. Canada looks forward to the results of those meetings in order better to co-ordinate our own work in this area. In fact, Canada's assistance programme to the Sahel has, as one of its three focuses, the stabilization of vegetative cover precisely to protect this delicate environmental balance.

Secondly, financial resources include domestic holdings such as private and public savings, as well as foreign aid and export earnings. We are encouraged by the summit meeting Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of 1985, which called for increasing agriculture's share of total national investment to between 20 per cent and 25 per cent by 1989. Obviously, however, agriculture cannot stand alone. All national investment rates must be increased.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates that the savings rate for non-oil-exporting countries in Africa barely reached 15 per cent throughout 1980 to 1984. That is simply not high enough to encourage growth. The question of export earnings, debt and capital inflows plays an important part in determining the resources available for investment, as well as being an integral part of the international economic environment. Somehow, that environment must be improved in order to provide more opportunities for African development.

Since 1980, total official development assistance flows to Africa - including those from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), have reached over \$10 billion per annum - and this during a time of recession for developed-country economies. That figure accounts for 48 per cent of total local investment in the non-oil-exporting sub-Saharan African countries. That kind

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of extravagant dependence on development assistance makes no sense. It is clearly destructive. More genuine local investment and a redirection of resources towards agriculture are needed. It calls for much closer co-ordination between African Governments and donors.

Thirdly, policy formation should itself be treated as a key resources. If the natural and financial wherewithal is not used effectively, Africa will not turn the corner from crisis management to long-term growth and development. Accordingly, it is imperative that domestic economic policies facilitate necessary adjustment and that sectoral policies encourage increased investment and production through pricing arrangements, land use, agricultural inputs, transportation and marketing.

Fourthly, co-ordination, too, can be thought of as a key resource, without unduly stretching the meaning of that word. Co-ordination between donors, multilateral agencies and African Governments can reduce duplication, avoid bottle-necks and enhance the use of funds. While African Governments must take the lead role, it is the responsibility of all to ensure that co-ordination is raised to the level of holy economic writ.

It is with these resources - of environment, finance, policy and co-ordination - that the great long-term problems of Africa must be attacked. Bluntly stated, those problems include the following.

First, food production: subsistence agriculture does not allow for the accumulation of significant food surpluses. Policies to increase real incomes for those who produce food inevitably stimulate food production - forgive the obvious. However, more than just agriculture pricing policies has to be changed. There is a complex of other factors, including transportation, crop storage and farm inputs. Moreover, stepped-up agricultural research into local food crops is an important factor in increasing yields. All of those aspects, taken together, can begin to

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build an indigenous agricultural base of sufficient viability to withstand future depredations.

Secondly, as regards infrastructure, the first phase of the United Nations Transport and Communication Decade for Africa has, according to the ECA, been encouraging. The second phase calls for an investment of \$18 billion. Infrastructure has an indispensable role to play in increasing Africa's ability to respond to future emergencies as well as expanding over-all output. We would go so far as to say that, in certain instances, the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing infrastructure should take priority over new investment.

Thirdly, as to human-resource development, the use of human resources, particularly in agriculture, is central to the proper management of the industry. In particular, acknowledging the key role of women in development, upgrading the value of their work and integrating their contributions to production and income-generation are essential goals. This is one of the great challenges for contemporary Africa. And the goals must be met if any real and sustained progress is to be accomplished in Africa in the long term.

Fourthly, we come to the 3 per cent per annum population growth. This growth rate is an integral part of the food-per-capita equation. A long-term decrease will lessen the impact of a future emergency.

Let me turn once again to the central focus of our debate here today. Canada firmly believes that the United Nations system, working with multilateral agencies, bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations, has an absolutely vital contribution to make in responding to the current emergency in Africa. Already, looking towards the future, the international community, through the United Nations, has formulated a number of coherent long-range plans of action for Africa, particularly through the World Bank and its six-point programme. The Special Fund for Sub-Saharan Africa has received over \$1 billion, of which sum, I am pleased to

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

say, Canada has contributed more than \$100 million. As an aside, not for self-congratulatory purposes but to demonstrate the degree of response to these international exigencies, I should also like to add for the record that Canada has increased its bilateral disbursements to Africa for the year 1985-1986 by almost exactly 50 per cent over 1983-1984. The bilateral sum has now reached \$430 million; total Canadian resources going to Africa will reach over \$850 million in 1985-1986. What we and others must ensure, however, is that the funds are effectively employed to deliver the maximum benefit. In the short term, that means saving lives; in the medium and long term, it means building, carefully and painstakingly, an invulnerable base for the future survival of the continent.

The African countries themselves now have a more thorough assessment of their own desperate difficulties, and at the same time they have already developed an enhanced capacity to respond to those difficulties. The international community, particularly the Western nations, has also realized its own responsibility to provide swift and massive emergency assistance on a scale hitherto unimaginable. Clearly, both Africa and the international community are now looking beyond the immediate crisis to a sustained collaborative effort the success of which will allow Africa, including all of its countries, communities and peoples, to develop. Amidst the ruin of the human experience there lies a potential triumph of the human spirit.

It would seem odd to make this speech - indeed, it may have seemed odd up until this point - without addressing the question of the proposed special session of the General Assembly on the African emergency. Canada happily supports the proposal. It is our hope that the debate, whenever it comes, will address the two overriding central issues: cushioning the impact of any present or future emergency and consolidating the long-term strategy for the continent. The special session, in its time and in its particular way, will then be reinforcing and

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

encompassing the many initiatives and policies already embraced or in process right across the United Nations system. After all, we have an excellent tentative blueprint in place: the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa.

We look for concrete practical results which can be supported by all and which will be of permanent, incontestable benefit to Africa.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

I have one final thing to say, because it is irresistible. I well remember, with others, that historic meeting in a little committee room downstairs on 17 December 1984, when the Office of Emergency Operations for Africa was launched. I well remember the pervasive gloom but stoic determination of those who graced the dais on that occasion - the Secretary-General himself, Mr. Stern of the World Bank, Mr. Saouma of the Food and Agriculture Organization and of course Bradford Morse, in whose hands the looming, massive operation was placed. I well remember the comments of my colleagues; apprehensive, pessimistic, bewildered, frantic. I well remember a host of subsequent meetings in 1985, with Mr. Morse in the Chair and Mr. Strong at his right arm, where Member countries, particularly donor countries, including Canada, fretted and cavilled and stewed over money, staff complements, duplication, co-ordination, delivery and the thousand other unnerving minutiae which sapped confidence and raised legitimate anxieties. But, above all, I well remember, and observe with exhilaration, that the Office of Emergency Operations for Africa refused to be traumatized, buckled down to the job and performed magnificently.

This last year has surely been one of the Organization's finest. The Secretary-General has exercised his mandate with inspiration, focus and clarity. The international community has been galvanized. That little Brad Morse operation, acting in the name of us all, collaborating with donor countries, recipient countries, non-governmental organizations and all the other relevant United Nations agencies; co-ordinating on the ground the distribution of the aid; overcoming what seemed to be in so many cases insuperable logistical difficulties - that Office of Emergency Operations demonstrated that the United Nations, when mobilized, can save hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of lives.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

There is a tendency in this place to measure the legitimacy of the United Nations solely in terms of political issues. Here is a case, however, when legitimacy and purpose are confirmed by the quality of our response to the human predicament.

It has all been memorable. It is a fitting reaffirmation on the fortieth anniversary. What we must now resolve is that 40 years hence the African continent will reflect a multitude of thriving economies where the human condition flourishes.

Mr. MOYA PALENCIA (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Africa, which is not a cold continent, is today threatened by the freezing of its economic and social development, and with famine and death. Therefore it is to be expected that Latin American countries, such as Mexico, although they also have problems of economic growth and serious social backwardness, should come to this forum to express their solidarity with the peoples of Africa and to contribute, together with the rest of the international community, to the resolution of the present crisis.

In 1984, when we adopted unanimously the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, the General Assembly recognized one of the most important common problems of our time. One year later we note that the situation continues to be very serious indeed and that, although some efforts have led to a reduction in the loss of life, greater co-operation is needed to resolve the short-term problems.

As the Declaration states, Africa is the least developed of all continents. Its prospects of recovery, growth and development are meagre and, furthermore, are threatened by the fragile state of the world economy. This situation makes it necessary for the international community to mobilize its resources at all levels in order to alleviate the burden and reverse the present trends.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

The African economy derives its main thrust from commodity trade. Commodity prices have been deteriorating, to the detriment of the least developed countries, and the economy is subject to serious pressures. The slow growth or lack of growth in the gross national product, the fall in export prices, net stagnation of official development assistance, protectionism on the part of the industrialized countries and the burden of external debt are examples of the structural imbalances it faces. Drought and malnutrition have exacerbated this difficult situation. In the biennium 1984-1985, 6.6 million tonnes of food were required and almost \$1 billion in various forms of assistance.

The Food and Agriculture Organization has identified 27 sub-Saharan countries which, as a result of drought and other problems, are facing serious food shortages. Of the 200 million persons living in those countries, 35 million have been seriously affected; 10 million have emigrated in search of food, water and grazing land and it is estimated that 1 million have died.

The hunger is the direct result of the per capita reduction of agricultural production in those countries. In 1984 the per capita rate of growth of food production was -1.7, and it was -2.5 in the countries hardest hit by drought. In the past five years the population has increased by approximately 3 per cent, while food production has increased by only 1 per cent. The export earnings of the countries of the region remain at extremely low levels owing to the deterioration in the prices of their main products, such as coffee, cocoa, copra, cotton and sugar.

Furthermore, the region has experienced a drastic reduction in international financial flows. The nominal value of loans from official sources fell by 33 per cent from 1980 to 1983. Foreign debt servicing has drastically curtailed the recovery capacity of African countries, as has been the case with several countries in Latin America. Debt servicing has absorbed 22 per cent of export

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

earnings, and capital payments between 1985 and 1987 will be two or three times those made between 1981 and 1983. Hit by drought and famine, millions of Africans are on the brink of disaster. Yet food-aid needs for the entire region in 1985 are less than 1 per cent of what is spent on the arms race.

We must deal with the root causes of the crisis by means of long-term measures of a structural nature so as to bring about a change, as indicated in the Lagos Plan of Action. The prospects are all the more uncertain in view of the developments in the world economy. This is confirmed by the projections of financial institutions, which have been revised downwards.

A special session of this Assembly devoted to the economic situation in Africa would enable progress to be made in the adoption of measures for the supply of food and drinking water, transportation, the resettlement of people in areas less affected by drought, health and nutrition programmes - in other words, the adoption of decisions that would help the development of the great human potential and resources of Africa.*

* The President took the Chair.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

Africa's food and agricultural situation has worsened even though rain has not been lacking in some of the countries. That situation is a source of great concern.

For more than 10 years now, food production has not kept pace with the rate of population growth. Previously Africa was an exporter of food. Now it imports more than 20 million tons of cereals per year; one out of every five persons uses imported food products. The outflow of foreign exchange is not offset by the sale of other products abroad. One quarter of the foreign exchange is devoted to food purchases, as compared with 10 per cent 15 years ago.

Today it is not enough to have the necessary money and to overcome the logistical difficulties. We are convinced that an agricultural and livestock rehabilitation programme must be implemented in the most seriously affected countries. The purpose of such a programme should be to provide farmers with sufficient input to begin the urgent production of commodities. More productive methods of agricultural production should be introduced.

There are many problems of all kinds facing the African continent. Urgent solutions are required, and they need not be short-term solutions. The measures taken should enable Africa to overcome the emergency and lay the bases for sound, long-term development.

The twenty-first century should be a century of hope and development. We must not let circumstantial differences and short-term interests hamper the fulfilment of our joint task. We must co-operate as much as we can, through our participation in its economy, in the efforts leading to the development of that continent.

Studies and action undertaken by the United Nations system have shown that Africa's capacity for development is threatened. Africa is not facing a temporary problem that can be solved through adjustment policies. Rather, it is facing a twofold challenge: survival and development.

(Mr. Moya Palencia, Mexico)

The effects of the adjustment measures that some countries have begun to apply have reduced internal demand. That has drastically curbed imports and has led to a collapse of consumption and investment. But it has also affected economic structures and brought about a reduction in the standards of living, which in turn has affected development capacities.

For Africa as well as for other regions afflicted by the crisis, means must be established that would increase production, restore development capacity, increase productivity, improve the quality of life, rehabilitate economic structures and change the international economic situation.

The question remains: how can a sound and beneficial relationship be re-established between the continent and the world economy, especially through trade, money and finance? For the developing world, and Africa in particular, increasing access of products to markets and an improvement in the terms of trade, as well as an appropriate amount of fresh financial resources, are vital elements of any strategy.

Mexico feels a special bond with the African countries. Our cultural heritage was enriched by Africa's contributions, traditions, customs, rhythms and colours; they are today a part of what we are. Like Africa, we had to struggle for our self-determination and independence. Today we are struggling together for our development. We have co-operated in concrete, albeit limited, efforts. Africans from various countries have received Mexican scholarships and, together with us, have attended our universities and technical schools. We believe that there are immense prospects for further co-operation. We hope that we shall be able to achieve that.

On this occasion, we express our deep solidarity with and support for the peoples of Africa in their struggle for their self-determination and development and to overcome the critical situation now facing them as a result of the absence of a more just and human international economic order.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): My delegation is speaking during the discussion on the agenda item entitled "Critical economic situation in Africa" because it believes that the problems involved are not of a regional character alone. Rather, they touch upon the entire complex of economic relations and economic development in the world. And they relate very closely to political, social and humanitarian problems of the present time. As was underscored by many Heads of State or Government, ministers and special envoys from African countries during the general debate and the session commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the economic development of many African countries is characterized, on the one hand, by a further aggravation of the already formidable economic and social problems in the continent and, on the other, by the enormous endeavours of the African nations and Governments to check and reverse that critical economic development.

On behalf of the Organization of African Unity, Ambassador Sarré of Senegal highlighted in his remarkable speech today the relevant activities of those States, as reflected at the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held at Addis Ababa in July 1985. At the same time, there is a growing awareness by world public opinion that this precarious situation must be remedied through effective measures and the granting of comprehensive international assistance. The German Democratic Republic has followed these developments with great sympathy and active commitment. In that context, my country's policy line is based on the following premises:

First, the German Democratic Republic's support for and co-operation with African States is geared, in the first place, to promoting the all-round and balanced development of their economic potentials. In the conduct of its external economic relations with those countries, the German Democratic Republic concentrates on areas that are of crucial importance for their independent development.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic
Republic)

Secondly, the German Democratic Republic regards the complex development of economic and scientific-technological relations with those countries as a contribution to the democratic restructuring of international economic relations.

Thirdly, there is an intrinsic relationship between the removal of the danger of a nuclear world war and the prevention of the militarization of outer space, the halting of the arms race, concrete disarmament measures and measures towards the solution of economic problems. The Warsaw Treaty member States, in their Declaration recently adopted in Sofia, have again devoted great attention to this fact. It is quite obvious that the implementation of the far-reaching proposals submitted by the Warsaw Treaty members with a view to halting the arms race - for example, the proposal concerning substantial cutbacks in the arms expenditures of States and allocation of a part of the funds thus saved to economic and social programmes of developing countries - would bring about a turn for the better in the African continent also.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Fourthly, my country's assistance to and co-operation with African States and national liberation movements are imbued with a spirit of solidarity with the African peoples in their struggle for development and peace, against apartheid and oppression. Here I wish to recall the concrete data on our comprehensive assistance published in an official United Nations document of 3 October 1985 under the symbol A/C.2/40/2.

In their Declaration on the Economic Situation in Africa, adopted at the recent OAU summit meeting, the members of that Organization reaffirmed the following:

"We are, therefore, determined to take concrete actions and measures individually and collectively for the achievement of the economic development of our continent in unity and solidarity of African peoples and Member States." (A/40/666, p. 4)

The Lagos Plan of Action and the basic strategy contained therein embody the collective will of the African States to overcome the critical economic situation. The German Democratic Republic fully endorses these documents.

The Declaration on security, disarmament and development in Africa, adopted in Lomé in August 1985, rightly points to the close interrelationship of the objectives of security, disarmament and development not only in Africa but in the world at large.

The aforementioned documents show the way towards the solution of the economic and social problems in the African continent. Notwithstanding the tremendous efforts by the States concerned and broad international assistance, the situation basically has remained unchanged. The underlying reasons are well known. The German Democratic Republic shares the view that one of the main reasons resides in the deformation of economic structures caused by colonialism. The capitalist world economy with its crisis-prone development entails enormous burdens for Africa.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

High interest rates, an over-valued dollar and price development, which have adverse effects on the main export commodities of the African States, have further worsened the terms of trade for these countries in international markets. Today, quite a number of States in the region have to set aside between 50 and 60 per cent of their export earnings for the tremendous debt servicing. Also in recent years transnational corporations have steadily increased their super-profits in spite of rampant poverty, hunger and mounting economic problems in the African countries. The facts are destroying the myth of what is alleged to be unselfish assistance and show that capital outflows to Western countries far exceed the influx of capital. This dramatic situation has been aggravated by natural disasters.

Together with other socialist States members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the German Democratic Republic once again affirms its solidarity and support for the African peoples in their just struggle for independence and economic progress. A considerable portion of the assistance provided by the German Democratic Republic in 1984 to developing countries and national liberation movements to the tune of 1.82 billion marks, went to Africa; more than 270 million marks have been made available in recent years for crash relief measures, including food, seeds, medicaments and other commodities of vital importance to the afflicted States. In 1985 the German Democratic Republic has continued relief aid to African States. For that purpose more than 130 million marks have been allocated and the greater part of the services thus funded have already materialized. Large consignments have been dispatched, for example, to Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia, which has been particularly hard hit by the drought. Aircraft and crews of the German Democratic Republic have this year transported 9,000 tons of relief consignments to Ethiopia.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

In the Tigre province alone they have provided 60,000 people with foodstuffs every day. Donations from the population of the German Democratic Republic have been used to finance solidarity consignments of medicaments and medical supplies, as well as clothing, educational material and vehicles.

Urgently needed assistance has also gone to African countries such as Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Guinea, Congo, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Mali, Sao Tome and Principe and other States.

However, emergency relief measures, in our view, are only one element of the complex action needed to tackle the critical economic situation in Africa. Therefore, in the conduct of its co-operative relations with many countries of that continent the German Democratic Republic has been focusing on long-term projects and agreements. My country is participating in the establishment of the requisite industrial basis, the promotion of higher productivity in agriculture, the setting up of efficient public and co-operative sectors in the national economies and the training of the required manpower, - challenge indeed for these countries. I should like to single out the long-term co-operation conducted along those lines with Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania. The German Democratic Republic has assisted in these countries in the construction of industrial plant and in infrastructure projects. Some 880 Zambian nationals will complete skilled job training in the German Democratic Republic by the end of 1985, while 5,000 Mozambican nationals are undergoing vocational training.

Solving the economic problems in Africa also presents a challenge to the United Nations. We appreciate the efforts and personal dedication of the United Nations Secretary-General in this process. There is no doubt that the United Nations has to make a contribution of its own in order to mobilize new potential and reserves and to lead development trends in that region on to a positive course. It is true that the co-ordination of relief measures within the framework

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Republic)

of the United Nations system remains an important task. What is more urgently needed than ever is specific action to promote food production in African countries, to mobilize Africa's substantial human resources, to ensure that there are more possibilities for education and job qualification and to advance in a balanced manner agricultural and industrial development in Africa.

These are only a few priority areas for operative programme-related activities of the United Nations. At the same time, we regard these efforts as being connected with the need finally to translate into reality the decisions concerning the establishment of a new international economic order and finally to get the required negotiations within the United Nations off the ground.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The German Democratic Republic shares the view of many developing countries that the calling of a special session of the General Assembly to deal with the critical economic situation in Africa and of an international conference on the African foreign debt situation would further the solution of the outstanding problems.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples is an occasion for us to emphasize strongly that apartheid still persists in the south of the African continent. The policy of aggression and State terrorism pursued by the racist régime of South Africa both inside and outside the country and the policy of "constructive engagement" with that régime endanger not only peace and security in the region but international co-operation in general. This obstructs the efforts of the African nations to make economic progress, to solve their socio-political problems and to overcome hunger and misery.

In conclusion may I assure you, Mr. President, that the German Democratic Republic continues to be prepared to add its contribution to the common struggle for the solution of international economic problems.

Mr. MACIEL (Brazil): Solidarity and humanitarian assistance are moral imperatives in international relations which impose upon us the responsibility of making a vigorous response to the drastic situation in Africa. A clear distinction must be made, however, between short-term needs and long-term structural requirements that are closely related to the overall development process and connected with the general crisis of the world economy as a whole and the economies of developing countries in particular.

Brazil, as is well known, is not in a position to provide very significant emergency assistance in each and every case. We are nevertheless pursuing a policy of intensifying our programmes of co-operation oriented towards the fulfilment of

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

the objectives laid down by the African countries themselves, and called for by different General Assembly resolutions adopted in response to the critical economic situation in Africa as reflected in item 30 of the agenda.

Over the last few years my delegation has had the opportunity to present in this and in other forums a brief description of our programmes with several African countries. We are committed to enhancing that co-operation. In this connection we are seeking to increase the scope of our co-operation with Africa within the plans of the Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, that being an area in which, through experience, Brazil has acquired considerable expertise, working within the great diversity of geographic and economic conditions of its own territory. Since 1983, when Professor Adedeji visited Brazil, we have been increasing our co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and have already undertaken several tasks related to the Transport and Communications Decade.

Such an undertaking, however, requires the assistance of international organizations for development and, given the priority accorded to the critical economic situation in Africa, we hope they will be in a position to support new initiatives of South-South co-operation in this area. In this connection, and with a view to augmenting the possibilities for furthering our co-operation with Africa, my delegation, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ECA, has been exploring alternative ways in which to obtain supplementary financing, particularly in relation to convertible currency requirements, for the various programmes we have with African countries.

Since I have touched upon the need for the participation of international organizations, let me refer to the leading role of the United Nations and its family of organizations in this matter. They have been called upon to play a central role in the promotion, implementation and co-ordination of several activities already under way. This has meant a heavy burden because of the

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

additional tasks and responsibilities assumed, a burden which has not, however, been relieved by the necessary financial support. This is very much the case with the United Nations Development Programme, which is seeking to increase the scope and amount of its operations, but has not been supplied with the necessary resources adequately to fulfil those new requirements without hampering the continuation of other activities. It is a fact, however, that the resources already devoted to emergency relief, although obviously not on a level with actual requirements, represent a substantial amount, largely channelled through the United Nations system, but very little of this amount is being utilized to finance the expenditures incurred by several of the organizations involved in this process.

I turn now to the long-term requirements. In the course of the discussions we have had on this issue, the interrelationship of African problems and world problems has been pointed out in several statements, in particular in those of the African Heads of State and Government, the Secretary-General, the Administrator of the UNDP, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Executive Director of ECA. There evidently exists a set of problems which are specific to Africa, but the long-term requirements are closely linked to the grave crisis in the world economy and must be treated accordingly. In this connection, the humanitarian assistance programmes, important as they are, cannot replace the necessary medium and long-term development plans and programmes.

It is gratifying to note that the African countries themselves are also concerned with this question and have presented a set of overall requirements related to the structural imbalances of the present economic order. This point was clearly made during the discussion of this item at the July session of the Economic and Social Council, when such issues as the improvement and stabilization of the prices of raw materials, the increasing protectionist trend and the gravity of the foreign debt situation were emphasized.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

The international community has given a demonstration of its willingness to respond to the emergency needs of Africa. The more profound questions raised by long-term requirements, however, demand similar positive action. Questions of the interrelationship between money, trade and finance are at the centre of the problems afflicting Africa, as well as other developing regions of the world. The General Assembly, according to the Charter of the United Nations, not only is entitled to consider these issues, but also has the duty of doing so. We hope that this fortieth session will also respond to those structural problems.

Mr. REED (United States of America): The delegation of the United States of America appreciates the opportunity to discuss the economic situation in Africa and to offer recommendations as to what we, the United Nations system and African Governments can do about it. Our primary focus should be on rehabilitating Africa from its most devastating crisis of this century and on restarting the largely derailed engines of long-term development. Yet we should also look back over these past 18 months to review what we and the international community have learned in our collaborative response to the suffering peoples of Africa. Additionally, although the rains have returned to many regions and there are encouraging signs in the agricultural sector, the pernicious cycle of drought undoubtedly will return at some point in this decade or the next. African Governments and the international community must take preparedness steps now to minimize its future impact.

In reviewing the response to the African emergency over the past 18 months, we have witnessed one of the most Herculean mobilizations of humanitarian concern and support in recent years. Names such as Eritrea, Tigre, Darfur and Gao have become familiar to us as flash-points of a human tragedy in the making and as symbols of the difficulties faced in coping with it. While responding to disaster and human suffering usually brings out the best in us, the relief effort has not been without its difficulties. Nothing on this scale and complexity ever is. Political and logistical obstacles continue to be strewn in the way of the timely delivery of relief supplies in some countries. Vested interests within the United Nations system continue to surface, souring the collaborative effort.

Nevertheless the United Nations system and the international community can be justly proud of their response, dedication and effectiveness and of the leadership in this massive relief effort provided by the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA). OEOA's capacity to mobilize resources, broker inter-agency collaboration at the field and Headquarters level and, importantly,

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to sustain the momentum of international support has demonstrated to the sceptics and detractors of the United Nations that it can indeed deliver. Let us not too quickly forget the OEOA as we move forward from emergency assistance to longer-term economic development. The effectiveness of OEOA and its closely co-operating agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should serve as a model of what is possible in dealing with a full-scale emergency, as well as in rediscovering the purpose and direction of the United Nations.

We in the United States are proud of our response to the people of Africa in their hour of desperate need. It represents a unique coming together of disparate interests united by a common bond of wanting to help others less fortunate than ourselves. Private citizens, schools and universities, business, the media, voluntary organizations, churches, the legislative and executive branches of government at local, state and national levels have all worked together to develop programmes, gather assistance and deliver relief aid to peoples at risk. The spirit that dominates is that of international co-operation, the sense that Africa's needs are our needs and that this is an issue that cuts across political party lines and unites us all.

During the past 12 months alone the Government of the United States of America has provided over a half of all emergency food aid to Africa. This represents more than 3 million metric tons, or \$1.1 billion. Additionally, the United States has provided \$135 million in new non-food emergency assistance funds to sub-Saharan Africa. I should stress that these figures are over and above the United States regular economic assistance programme to Africa, which rose to over \$1 billion in 1985. Importantly too, individual Americans and private organizations have provided well over \$200 million in emergency assistance needs to Africa this year.

(Mr. Reed, United States)

We have relearned through the tragic crisis of Africa the meaning of effective collaboration, of pooling our resources and skills towards a common goal. The television media and free press have played a considerable role in sustaining the concern of the international community, and now that the images of starving children fade from our view and food stocks are being rebuilt, the major challenge before us is to maintain our concern for the less visually dramatic problems of long-term economic development for Africa. For development is long term, without quick remedies or miraculous solutions. And, after the current crippling drought in which so much infrastructure deteriorated or simply disappeared, it will be doubly difficult.

The drought of the past several years dramatized and aggravated sub-Saharan Africa's most profound economic crisis in modern history. It was not its principal cause. Africa is a continent of young nations, most of which have become independent during the past 25 years. Many of these young nations have been undergoing the often painful and costly process of experimentation with a range of political and economic development models, some of which have worked and many of which have failed. Only 20 years ago many in the international community looked at these emerging nations with great optimism, calling Africa the sleeping giant because of its vast natural and human resources and because of its development potential.

Even in the late 1970s and early 1980s, before the drought, there was less euphoria about the African potential. Most of the development indicators, such as literacy, infant mortality, food production and life expectancy rates, were plateauing if not in decline. Some countries, such as the Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Botswana and Malawi, proved to be the exceptions, evidencing positive and equitable growth in almost all sectors. But collectively, while Asia and Latin America made progress, Africa appeared to be standing still.

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Just as the solutions for African development are complex, so are the causes of development failure. If we are permitted to generalize, however, in too many instances African Governments appeared intent on stifling the initiative of their farmers and private sector in order to give privileges to a small but politically influential urban elite. This, along with high investment in and protection for industry and too little priority to agriculture, has produced the all too familiar results: erosion of the food production sector; cheap, imported food; heavily subsidized and largely inefficient industry; the generation of very little investment capital from private domestic savings and, often because of limited opportunities, the flight of skilled manpower to more economically dynamic countries. Declining food production, expanding population, heavy indebtedness and a limited resource base have all contributed to the economic crisis and a perceptible decline in the standard of living. The average African today is poorer than he was in 1970. Unless current trends and policies change, he will become poorer still.

Rather than adjust to the poor results of their economic policies in the 1970s, many countries borrowed heavily as petrodollars were plentiful and net capital flows were rising. These capital flows permitted countries to postpone needed structural adjustment until their internal situation had deteriorated to the level we find today. Now, they can no longer ignore policy reforms, and such overdue reforms will not be easy.

Additionally, bilateral and multilateral donors to many emerging nations often channelled their concessional aid into expensive infrastructure projects, many of which today can no longer be maintained owing to high recurring costs and low revenues. The donor of the 1960s and 1970s appeared more intent on filling gaps on a Government's wish list than in working in collaborative fashion with Governments and donors towards priority development objectives. One can find the remains of these capital-intensive development schemes scattered across the African

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landscape. We, as providers of development assistance, and the recipients of such assistance cannot return to the same old ways. They have largely failed and new development assistance formats need to be found.

As I indicated earlier, the tragic drought served to reawaken interest in Africa and to heighten concern for long-term development approaches and needs. We have heard many analyses of what went wrong and have offered ours. Some continue to be pessimistic about the prospects for sustainable economic growth in many regions of the continent. Similar expressions of doubt over India's ability ever to feed itself were heard only a decade ago. But that vast and complex country, with more mouths to feed than all of sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrated the possible by reordering its priorities to maximize food production. It can be done in the case of Africa. It must be done.

The emergency in Africa has troubled and shaken us all, but its catharsis has engendered a new spirit of realism. African Governments are beginning to change policies in a number of ways that should encourage farmers to produce more. Ghana, on an economic slide for at least a decade and only recently recovered from drought, gave priority attention to the rural sector and in a remarkable turnaround has produced its first surplus corn crop in years. Some few countries which have consistently put emphasis on the agricultural sector appear to have weathered economic difficulties better than most.

So it is possible to get the engine of economic development restarted and to move towards food self-reliance. We are pleased that the Declaration issued by the Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in July looked realistically at the problems and failures of development and recognized the responsibilities of African Governments themselves for the formulation of policies and programmes conducive to development, as well as the need to give priority attention to the agricultural sector. In fact those at the OAU Summit committed their Governments "to the gradual increase in the share of agriculture in national

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total public investment of between 20 and 25 per cent by 1989" (A/40/666, p. 6, para. 11). This is a very positive statement of new priorities deserving the support of the international community.

Given these positive signs and this new realism among many African countries, the commitment of the United States of America to long-term economic development remains strong. During the Administration of President Ronald Reagan, our regular economic assistance programme to sub-Saharan Africa has risen by over 55 per cent. In close collaboration with our partners of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Arab funds and the international finance institutions, we work to avoid programme duplication. Together, these sources are providing some 86 per cent of the assistance received by Africa. We note with sincere regret that Eastern bloc countries are providing only about 2 per cent of Africa's economic assistance.

United States bilateral assistance to Africa centres on policy reform programmes which create incentives for growth and enable African farmers, as well as businessmen, to play a more dynamic role. Interrelated programmes are designed to develop technologies, institutions and human capital. We have learned through trial and error over the last 30 years of development assistance that the private sector is an effective engine for growth. A World Bank study has shown that the less developed countries which created favourable environments for the private sector had much higher growth rates than those which did not.

We are giving considerable priority to the agricultural sector, supporting pricing and marketing reforms and programmes for increased farmer productivity. We plan to spend approximately \$1 billion for agricultural research in Africa over the next 15 years, and in January of this year President Reagan announced a new multi-year food assistance initiative designed to support policy reforms in the agricultural sector.

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In addition to providing quick-disbursing balance-of-payment support through cash grants and commodity programmes, \$75 million in project assistance through the Economic Policy Reform Programme has been made available to provide additional, more flexible assistance to those African countries undertaking critical policy reforms.

The United States clearly recognizes the severity of Africa's economic problems and the heavy debt burdens of the region. If the new realism of African Governments and the move towards policy reform are to bear fruit, then the donor community must devise a well co-ordinated assistance programme. Failure to do so will only give credence to the critics of such reform and undermine the efforts of those African leaders who have had the courage and foresight to take strong action.

We have, for this reason, given a great deal of attention to proposals our Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. James Baker, made at the Seoul meeting of the World Bank last month. While we are still discussing those proposals with our partners of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), they are aimed at substantially increasing the amount of concessional financing African and other less-developed countries could receive through the IMF Trust Fund. This would channel Trust Fund repayments to poorer countries, and we are pleased that the Interim Committee at Seoul adopted that proposal. Additionally, our broader proposal provides for a greater role for the World Bank in structural lending to the poorer countries, and depends on a closer collaboration between the Bank and the IMF. Much remains to be done to give specific form to this broader proposal, and we are working diligently with African and OECD leaders, as well as the international financial institutions, to make it work. The United States would consider additional resources for this broad Bank/IMF approach if others made equitable additional contributions.

(Mr. Reed, United States)

All have learned a great deal from the past and from the current emergency, and we all have a more realistic view of Africa's needs. As I noted earlier, the momentum and concern for Africa triggered by the tragic drought must be maintained over the several decades of long-term development that will be necessary for Africa to begin to realize its full economic potential. Much has been done to sustain that concern within the United Nations context. Last year our delegation voiced the strong view that priority attention should continue to be focused on Africa. As a consequence of this and the efforts of others we aired our views on Africa's short-term and long-term needs at the Economic and Social Council session this summer, and we are again, some four months later, discussing this important matter at the fortieth session of the General Assembly. African Heads of State, in accordance with the OAU Declaration, are calling for a special session of the General Assembly on the African economic crisis. The United States of America supports the need to give continued priority attention to Africa to maintain the momentum of support. In fact, President Reagan, in discussion with the OAU Chairman, President Diouf, recently endorsed the special session proposal. Our delegation strongly believes, nevertheless, that such a meeting must be tightly structured and sharply focused on Africa's development needs and realities. It must avoid calling for solutions that have proved unworkable and new structures or mechanisms that duplicate others. The special session, instead, should detail the steps African Governments themselves are taking to reorder their development priorities, should review the existing bilateral and multilateral assistance modalities, and should determine where any gaps exist. The United States at this point plans to devote its best development talents to this effort.

In addition, we must be careful to minimize any misunderstanding of the special session's purpose in the eyes of the public. The United States would

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therefore recommend that in order to reduce costs the special session should be planned to be contiguous with any resumed session of the General Assembly.

The United Nations, through the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa and its collaborating agencies, and the international community, have demonstrated their capacity for co-operation, concern and response. We must maintain the momentum of that concern for, as is clear, there is no reason to lose confidence in Africa's recovery and long-term development. Clearly, too, there is much to be done. The task in front of us is beyond the capability of a single country. The United Nations system as a whole, and each of us individually, must remain committed to the task.

Mr. KULAWIEC (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): At the outset I should like, on behalf of the Czechoslovak delegation, to congratulate the delegations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR on the anniversary of the great October Revolution.

Mankind is currently facing several global problems, among which, apart from the nuclear conflict, one of the most important is the problem of famine and malnutrition from which many hundreds of millions of inhabitants of many developing countries are suffering, primarily in Africa. We therefore welcome the initiative of the United Nations in its appeal to help to promote a solution to that problem.

(Mr. Kulawiec, Czechoslovakia)

The granting of time, for the second year running, to consideration of the question of famine and the critical situation in Africa in this forum of the General Assembly is fully justified.

Czechoslovakia has frequently explained its position on the problems of famine and malnutrition in developing countries, on the basis of far-reaching analyses of their real causes, at the same time bearing in mind other aspects as a result of which the problem of famine has been further complicated. A period of 25 years has elapsed since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The emergence of politically independent States has been an inspiring success scored by the national liberation movements in former colonies. However, growing economic problems in the developing countries provide abundant proof of the fact that, to overcome the consequences of centuries of colonial plunder, it is not enough simply to guarantee the political independence of those countries. Only the next step, economic - and I stress "economic" - decolonization and the related establishment of a new and just international economic order can prevent the use of ever more improved and sophisticated neo-colonialist practices and subsequently serve to improve the standards of living of the population.

In this connection, I should like to emphasize that resolution of any global problems, including the unsatisfactory situation with regard to the food supply in a number of developing countries, is possible only if there is peace, mutual trust, cessation of the arms race and a gradual process of disarmament. No one can deny that, despite the rain that has been falling for some months now in most of the African countries, the problem of famine persists. Additional difficulties have arisen, the most serious of which is lack of seed, overflowing warehousing facilities in a number of African ports and the adverse consequences of inadequate infrastructures, which are becoming more and more pronounced.

(Mr. Kulawiec, Czechoslovakia)

Drought and an increasing rate of population growth are undoubtedly extremely important factors which have a noticeable impact on the ability to provide the populations with food. However, these factors only serve to complicate further an already critical economic situation, the origins of which can be traced to an underdeveloped material and technological basis in the African countries as a result of their colonial past.

Most of the African countries have predominantly agrarian economies, which predetermine the place they occupy in the current system of the international division of labour. In practice, this division is made lopsided by the activities of transnational corporations, which seek to secure for themselves an unending outflow of capital much greater in volume than the original investments made in selected sectors of the economies of the developing countries. Thus there is a growing tendency to preserve the single-crop nature of the economies of the developing countries, which leads to a considerable vulnerability in their economies and increases their dependence on developed capitalist States. At the present time, when millions of people in the developing countries are suffering from famine, some capitalist countries are engaged in destroying their own agricultural surpluses. This is done in order to keep the prices of agricultural products at the existing levels. To destroy these surpluses, amounting to several million tons, costs hundreds of millions of United States dollars. So what we have is an anomaly stemming from the very logic of the way in which the free market forces function - a system that is at present much lauded by certain developed capitalist countries. At the same time, this stands out in stark contrast with the way in which these countries grant so-called official development assistance to the developing States.

(Mr. Kulawiec, Czechoslovakia)

The developing countries are experiencing the negative effects of the infiltration of private and State capital into their economies and the fluctuations on world markets. They all, to a greater or lesser degree, depend on the importation of staple foodstuffs and are suffering a whole series of negative consequences: for example, increasingly difficult access to world markets because of the application of protectionist measures, price intervention policies, increased dependence on unstable currency rates or the consequences of high interest-rate policies. Therefore the alarming situation which can be seen in the economies of the African countries, particularly in their prevailing agrarian sectors, cannot be considered in isolation but only against the general background of the world capitalist economy.

The newly-independent African countries are faced with no easy task, in tackling the problem of the existing unsatisfactory division of ownership and organization of labour. These problems can hardly be resolved without some sort of international assistance, with full regard being paid at the same time to the sovereignty of those countries.

According to United Nations figures, as a result of the famine and malnutrition in Africa, 30 million people are on the borderline between life and death, and the amount of assistance needed to rescue them represents a sum which is no less than \$1.5 billion.

(Mr. Kulawiec, Czechoslovakia)

In the forefront there is the need to overcome speedily the direct consequences of the critical economic situation in Africa. Particular attention is being focused on humanitarian assistance. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has never sought to belittle the importance of humanitarian aid to offset temporarily some of the most acute problems, such as famine and malnutrition suffered by some tens of millions of those who inhabit Africa. We also participate in the granting of such assistance, both bilaterally and multilaterally. However, we believe that it should be emphasized that this form of aid, whether short-term bilateral assistance or various kinds of donations and other forms of assistance through international, governmental and non-governmental organizations, cannot eliminate the negative consequences of neo-colonialist relationships. Consequently, it cannot in fact produce a fundamental solution to Africa's critical situation. Indeed, the effective solution of Africa's economic problems will have to be a long-term process. Its success will depend essentially on a radical refashioning of existing structures in the national economies of the developing countries in that continent.

A problem of fundamental significance is the way in which the very concept of restructuring should be construed. In a recent publication by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) we read that external financing only serves to defer restructuring, since it results essentially in simply accumulating the developing countries' economic problems. We entirely concur with that conclusion. It should be stressed, however, that the concept of "restructuring" is by no means in practice always responsive to the actual requirements for the independent development by the developing countries of their economies. In a number of instances, the developing countries are saddled with restrictive budgetary and investment programmes, the promotion of the private sector and the increased influence of transnational corporations. But this kind of "restructuring" simply

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leads to maintaining colonialism, to more dependence on outside sources and to an increase in unemployment, poverty and social tensions.

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade contains a call for account to be taken, in the determination of the conditions for the use of resources of the International Monetary Fund, of the social and political targets of member countries and of the economic priorities which they have set for themselves. We think that this call should be adhered to in practice. Recent developments in Africa have shown how important it is to gear those countries' economic development to satisfying the requirements of all segments of the population, not simply the privileged segments.

Czechoslovakia, as a Socialist country, has traditionally been a partner of the African countries in economic co-operation. It renders assistance to the African countries, particularly long-term assistance. This includes the supplying of comprehensive equipment and the sending of experts, as well as the training of national cadres from the developing countries in Czechoslovakia. In 1983-1984, Members of the United Nations were informed about the degree of economic assistance given by Czechoslovakia to those countries, and of the proportion of the national income that this assistance represented. In 1984, Czechoslovakia provided the developing countries with assistance that was equivalent to .9 per cent of the national income; the least developed countries accounted for an amount equivalent to .15 per cent of the national income.

To the extent of our economic possibilities, we channel the required humanitarian assistance through the Government and trade unions and through women's, youth and other public organizations. Nevertheless, here again we shall continue to endeavour to lay emphasis on the long-term nature of this assistance. At the same time, we firmly oppose the misuse not only of long-term but also of humanitarian assistance for interference in the internal affairs of countries and for the application of political pressure on sovereign States.

(Mr. Kulawiec, Czechoslovakia)

For a number of years now, Czechoslovakia has been sharing with the African countries its experience in building a planned economy. We hold the view that the experience we have acquired in building an agro-industrial complex, the development of a veterinary service, the organization of the marketing of agricultural produce, the development of timber and water resources, and so forth, will continue to represent a valuable contribution to the further development of the African countries' economic infrastructures, and, indeed, will be a source of inspiration to them. Czechoslovakia is prepared to transmit its experience to the African countries both through the United Nations - for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization - and bilaterally. One example of long-term multilateral co-operation between Czechoslovakia and the developing countries was the successful use of bentonite for improving the yield of arable lands in Egypt, as part of a programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Czechoslovakia, like the other Socialist countries, is against any form of exploitation and strives for the normalization and improvement of international economic relations. It favours co-operation with all countries, regardless of their social structure. That is reiterated in the Declaration adopted at the recent meeting, on 23 October this year in Sofia, of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty. We are ready to continue to work in the United Nations and its family of organizations to ensure that the developing countries of Africa and other continents are enabled to overcome the consequences of colonialism and neo-colonialism and thus to achieve balanced, long-term economic development on the basis of respect for State sovereignty and for the benefit of the broadest segments of the population.

Mr. FISCHER (Austria): A year ago the world was shocked out of its complacency by the tragedy of sub-Saharan Africa, by pictures of starving children and of dry barren land from which its hungry people fled in despair. Behind that story, which dominated the media, there was a tragic combination of natural disasters, deteriorating terms of trade, rapid population growth, internal and external destabilization, and gradual environmental degradation.

The African peoples and Governments have undertaken heroic efforts to cope with the situation. They have been helped by an unprecedented aid drive of the international community, whose generous response was the more remarkable in that not just Governments but also countless individuals, artists, and non-governmental organizations have taken a hand in the relief effort.

Austria has contributed its share to those relief efforts. At the Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa in March 1985, Austria announced its pledge to devote an additional amount of approximately \$US 4.5 million to an emergency scheme granting bilateral food and logistic aid, as well as providing contributions in cash to emergency appeals of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In addition to that, Austria has pledged a contribution of about \$US 10 million to the Special Facility for sub-Saharan Africa established within the framework of the World Bank Group. We have further earmarked an amount of \$US 1 million for the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. There have also been substantial efforts, which still continue, by the Austrian population and by private organizations.

The immediate urgency of the crisis has apparently now abated; however, the structural causes of the disaster remain. At present Africa's critical situation is not so much a question of emergency aid as of sustained policies for economic recovery. Domestic policies and external assistance are required to overcome the

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

situation in the medium term and thus to avert the danger of a new catastrophe. This can happen only in an environment in which economic growth exceeds that of the population, a measure of new financial resources is available, and realistic and responsible domestic policies are implemented in order to make the best use of scarce resources.

Recent proposals to channel more resources from the multilateral financial institutions to those countries which are most in need have been welcomed by Austria. It is to be hoped that they will eventually, in conjunction with other factors such as free access to developed markets and more favourable commodity prices, contribute to the revitalization of the African economies.

The Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity have outlined the requirements at their 21st summit meeting, stressing the principle that the primary responsibility for development is in the hands of the African Governments themselves. Nevertheless, the international community also has a very clear partial responsibility for the rehabilitation of the African economies. I believe that now, having been sensitized to the situation and apprised of the dimensions of the problem, the world will find it difficult to return to its own concerns and ignore the need for continued and concerted action for Africa. The prospects are too serious for that. According to World Bank forecasts, even under positive assumptions the growth of the per capita gross national product in African countries is expected to be negative for the next 10 years. That outlook, which must be socially and politically unacceptable to the African nations, represents a formidable challenge to them and to the international community.

The response to that challenge comes at least in part from within the context of the United Nations. It was on the initiative of the Secretary-General that the Conference on Africa took place earlier this year. Last year the General Assembly

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

adopted by consensus a Declaration on Africa, which was reaffirmed this summer at the second session of the Economic and Social Council. Austria fully supports that instrument.

The co-ordination efforts of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa have demonstrated that effective system-wide co-ordination is possible in the United Nations system when a common crisis has to be faced. This is a notable achievement. We should make fuller use in the future of that co-ordination potential at our disposal, especially in so far as the early detection and subsequent prevention of new emergencies are concerned. To that end close co-operation between the New York organizations and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in Geneva would seem to be one desirable element. But, what is even more important, effective co-ordination will also be necessary in the new phase of medium-term and long-term rehabilitation.

We have taken note of the suggestion to convene a special session of the General Assembly next year to deliberate further on the critical economic situation of sub-Saharan Africa. That seems a logical idea in view of the urgency and importance of the issue, which was our priority topic last year in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In our view, the special session will have to be carefully prepared by the Secretariat and by delegations if it is to bring new benefits after so much previous discussion. A successful outcome might best be assured by focusing beforehand on a small number of specific, interrelated issues, rather than addressing the whole complex question of the overall economic situation in the relatively short time available. The Austrian delegation is prepared to participate actively and constructively in the preparations for the special session which, in our view, will be useful to alert further and keep alive high-level concern about development in Africa.

Mrs. DIAMATARIS (Cyprus): The General Assembly is considering for the second year the critical economic situation in Africa.

The misery affecting millions of people in the continent of Africa has horrified every single nation in this Organization and every single human being, regardless of ideology, religion or race.

It is difficult to comprehend, and even more difficult to explain, how in the twentieth century so many millions of people have been allowed to suffer to such an extent. The mere occurrence of this tragedy places a stigma upon our civilization.

None the less, we are encouraged by the outpouring of sympathy and by the generous contributions of countries, groups and individuals in an effort to alleviate the suffering of the African people.

It should be admitted, however, that more should and must be done at this time of crisis. The tragedy of the suffering of millions of people should become the tragedy of us all. At the same time it should act as a catalyst in bringing about changes in the countries involved that would make a recurrence of such a situation impossible.

The countries of Africa share many similarities with the economies of other developing countries in other areas of the world, including their high external debt, the servicing of which requires about 25 per cent of their export earnings, a deterioration of their terms of trade, fast population growth and a food production unable to keep pace with it.

Moreover, a number of well-known geographical, historical, climatic and environmental factors have contributed to creating this tragic situation faced by the people of Africa today, which is further exacerbated by the detrimental effects of drought, famine and desertification.

The grave economic crisis still facing Africa requires the urgent adoption of special and concrete measures to resolve the problem.

(Mrs. Diamataris, Cyprus)

In addition to the pressing need to respond to the emergency situation, serious attention should also be given to the medium-term and long-term developmental needs of Africa.

My delegation fully supports the international action proposed by the Secretary-General in his report in document A/39/627 of last year. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report in documents A/40/372 and Add.1 and 2.

Cyprus believes that, while the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, provided a framework for international action, there is still much to be done, particularly by way of assistance to the development efforts of the African countries themselves.

The Government of Cyprus fully supports the Plan of Action of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was adopted at its New Delhi and Luanda Ministerial Meetings and, in this respect, the Government and the people of Cyprus will do all they can to assist in solving this critical economic situation.*

Mr. AL MERREE (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): The economic crisis in Africa is deteriorating at an alarming rate. This note of alarm was sounded by many political leaders in their statements before the Assembly in the general debate and during the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. In diagnosing the economic crisis in Africa as a developmental crisis, the report of the Secretary-General in document A/40/372 places the economic situation in Africa in the right perspective. It must therefore be examined, dealt with and resolved from this standpoint, that is, as a

* Mr. Makeka (Lesotho), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al Merree, United Arab Emirates)

development crisis. However, the development crisis in sub-Saharan countries has certain characteristics upon which we must focus. The economies of the African countries, just like all other developing countries, have been and continue to be exposed to all the negative effects of the world economic crisis, but are in addition suffering increasingly as a result of the environmental and climatic conditions affecting the African continent as a result of desertification, drought, famine and disease. These factors transform the economic crisis in Africa into a critical emergency situation requiring swift action.

Consequently, the economic situation in Africa must be dealt with from two interrelated points of view, that is, the immediate short-term crisis and the long-term and medium-term situation, each of which substantially affects the other. While expressing our satisfaction at the reaffirmation by African leaders at the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that the basic responsibility for coping with the economic crisis rests with the African countries themselves, we fully concur with what Mr. Adebayo Adedeji, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, had to say in his statement before the Second Committee on 31 August 1985, namely, that the African continent cannot by its own efforts alone face the tremendous economic, social and humanitarian costs of the current crisis. An important responsibility must therefore be borne by the international community, the United Nations system and its specialized agencies in assisting developing countries to overcome this crisis both in the short term and in the long term.

As for urgent short-term relief measures, a continued state of alert is still sorely needed in order to sustain the international response to the African emergency. This relief effort must be pursued and strengthened so as to satisfy immediate needs, especially as regards food and agriculture.

(Mr. Al Merree, United Arab Emirates)

In this respect, we wish to pay tribute to the role played by the United Nations Officer for Emergency Operations in Africa in monitoring and defining emergency needs and in co-ordinating aid flows from various government organizations, non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations. We hope that this role will become more effective and will grow.

Here we wish to stress that greater attention must be paid to resolving problems in the transportation and communications sectors and to overhauling the networks which provide timely access to stricken population centres and regions. We also believe that we must continue implementing General Assembly resolution 39/29, as well as the annexed Declaration.

On another level, and in order to overcome the economic crisis in Africa, which is a development crisis, the response to the emergency situation must be linked in a concerted manner with medium and long-term development needs. The economic development crisis in Africa constitutes part of the economic crisis facing the developing countries as a whole, and this is affected by the level of economic performance on the international level, the complexity of international economic relations, international economic co-operation for development, policies related to international trade, financial flows, foreign indebtedness and other questions which still cry out for effective solutions within the framework of relations between the industrialized countries and the developing countries.

(Mr. Al Merree, United Arab Emirates)

If African economies are the most backward among the developing countries due to their vulnerability to the deteriorating economies on the international level, if all economic indicators, especially growth rates in major productive sectors, reveal a sombre picture of the future economic performance of African countries, then it becomes incumbent upon the international community to accord particular attention to the question of Africa's development within the framework of comprehensive and collective action to grapple with the problem of development on the international level.

In this context, we reiterate our support for the relevant resolutions of the Luanda Conference of Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers held in September 1985. We also reaffirm the declaration of the ninth ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 in New York held in October 1985.

Based on this premise, we wish to lend our support to the call of the African countries for the international community to give due attention to the declaration and the programme of priorities adopted by the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity held in Addis Ababa in July 1985.

We wish to place on record our approval and support of the desire of the African countries to convene a special session of the General Assembly at the ministerial level to consider issues related to the critical economic situation in Africa in order to galvanize the efforts of the international community to prescribe appropriate remedies so as to meet the basic requirements of long-term growth of African economies. That would contribute towards preventing a repetition of the tragedy which afflicts the African peoples today.

Mr. KURODA (Japan): It is with profound concern and a sense of grave responsibility that I speak about the ongoing tragedy in Africa. The critical economic situation there is a challenge to the peoples of the African continent and to the international community. The international effort of the past year to provide assistance to Africa has shown us that while this tragedy clearly stems from a drought of unprecedented severity, it also has deep-rooted structural causes, among them insufficient infrastructure and agricultural production, inadequate systems of transportation, and a lack of managerial and technological skills. The status report issued recently by the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa indicates that there has been some improvement in the situation, but the underlying problems and the crisis they have created remain. There is consequently a growing recognition that a sound process of medium- and long-term rehabilitation and development is necessary if this crisis is truly to be resolved.

The Government and people of Japan feel great sympathy and a sense of solidarity with Africa as it faces this grave economic crisis. In response to the appeal made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Japan has extended the maximum assistance possible. Japan provided food and agricultural assistance to Africa equivalent to approximately \$165 million in the period from January of last year through this March. In the fiscal year 1985, bilateral assistance extended by the Government of Japan in the form of grants to sub-Saharan Africa is anticipated to reach the level of 60 billion yen, which is approximately \$290 million at the current rate of exchange. Yen loans will total approximately \$100 million. Japan's voluntary contributions to the United Nations system will amount to approximately \$180 million, an increase of about 7 per cent over the fiscal year 1984, and it is estimated that about 30 per cent of these contributions will be allotted to Africa-related activities.

(Mr. Kuroda, Japan)

While Japan has extended a large amount of emergency assistance and while it recognizes that emergency aid continues to be needed, it is now devising a medium- and long-term programme of assistance to Africa. One element of this programme would be a continuing expansion of assistance to agricultural development, focusing on ways of increasing food production and of improving such agriculture-related infrastructure as transportation networks, storage facilities and water supplies.

In this connection, it is also our belief that a green revolution similar to that achieved in Asia and Latin America is possible in Africa, and that utilizing the available technology to this end would contribute to the recovery of African agriculture. It was on the basis of this idea that my Government formulated its proposal for a "Green Revolution for Africa", which was announced by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Abe, in his address to the General Assembly in September. This comprehensive plan, to be refined and implemented in full consultation with all the countries concerned, would include agricultural research, reforestation, utilization of remote sensing technology, improvement of agriculture-related infrastructure, and policies for stimulating production.

It should be pointed out that assistance extended to Africa by the Government of Japan is broadly and firmly supported by the Japanese people. This was demonstrated in the successful national campaign to collect 1.7 million blankets, the total value of which was \$20 million, to donate to Africa.

The Government of Japan is working to maintain, and indeed even increase, the level of public interest in the very serious situation in Africa. The week of 1 November has again this year been declared Africa Week as part of what the Government is calling its Campaign for Africa. This year Africa Week will focus on the cultures of Africa.

(Mr. Kuroda, Japan)

In December, with the co-operation of the Japanese Government, the United Nations Symposium on Africa will be held in Tokyo, highlighting United Nations activities for assistance to Africa, medium- and long-term African development policies, as well as the social and cultural resources of Africa. This symposium is expected to strengthen further popular support for the United Nations.

There is a growing awareness now of how important it is for the Governments and peoples of Africa to pursue development policies that will make them truly self-reliant. We feel encouraged by the courageous efforts some African Governments have made to deal with the crisis.

(Mr. Kuroda, Japan)

The recent summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity reaffirmed that the primary responsibility for responding to the crisis and turning the tide of this tragedy rests with the Governments and peoples of Africa. Determined action by African Governments to this end would be most welcome and it should go hand in hand with increased support by the whole international community.

The magnitude of the African crisis has aroused the deep concern of the entire world, which has shown a spirit of solidarity and commitment to working together with the peoples of Africa. In this regard, it should be pointed out again that the response to the initiatives taken by the United Nations has been unprecedented, and has resulted in tangible progress. We are very grateful to the Secretary-General for his efforts. To mention a few of the achievements to date, the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa has contributed to the monitoring of the situation and to effective and expanded United Nations assistance activities; the World Bank has established the Special Facility for sub-Saharan Africa; the International Monetary Fund is devising a plan to extend additional resources of a concessional nature, and the group of experts appointed by the Bonn economic summit meeting has submitted a report on following up aid to Africa. The very generous and positive response from the public and from private organizations is also worthy of special mention. All of these show the extent to which a United Nations initiative can be effective. We hope that the United Nations will continue to play a catalytic role in the effort to help Africa overcome the terrible crisis it faces.

In this connection, my delegation supports the proposal of the Organization of African Unity to convene a special session of the General Assembly. Such a meeting would enable the United Nations further to develop the role it has played in providing assistance to Africa. The meeting should be carefully prepared and conducted in a constructive and pragmatic manner in order to maintain and, indeed, add to the momentum of African assistance efforts. Clearly, one of the most valuable contributions the United Nations has made in the past two years is in

(Mr. Kuroda, Japan)

mobilizing world opinion and in guiding efforts to deal with the crisis. We recognize that the Organization will play a pre-eminent role in this area in 1986 and beyond.

I believe in the potential of the peoples of Africa to make their societies and economies solidly self-reliant. The United Nations Symposium on Africa, which I mentioned earlier, will discuss various aspects of the situation, emphasizing Africa's potential. I feel strongly that effective mobilization of this potential, and international assistance to that end, is the key to medium and longer-term rehabilitation and development. This is why my delegation has continually stressed the importance of human resources development at the meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Development Programme. Since every economic and social structure is basically the product of human activity, it is clear that the effective development and utilization of human resources is central to re-launching the development process in Africa. In any future discussions on Africa my delegation will be particularly interested in this area. Convening a special meeting should provide a welcome opportunity to hold future-oriented deliberations, to consolidate a framework for closer co-operation among all the parties concerned, and to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call upon the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to introduce a draft resolution on this matter.

Mr. SEEREKISSOON (Mauritius): My delegation has the honour, on behalf of the African Group, to introduce draft resolution A/40/L.15 on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa under item 30 of the agenda.

The draft is generally procedural. It contains two broad objectives. The main objective is the decision to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the longer-term economic problems in Africa, including the preparatory process

(Mr. Seereekissoon, Mauritius)

and the documentation for the session. The second objective is to have the General Assembly comment generally on the emergency which threatened millions of Africans in many parts of the continent, and which still persists in many countries despite the good rains this year.

Allow me now to turn to the operative part of the draft, as the preambular part is self-explanatory. Members are of course aware of the proposal at the twenty-first summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the economic situation in Africa. Our Heads of State and Government arrived at this proposal after careful consideration. They felt, as it is now widely recognized, that while the emergency situation by definition necessitated a prompt and generous response to save lives, it is imperative to address the root causes of such an emergency in order to prevent, on the one hand, recurrent emergencies and, on the other, to allow Africa to resume self-sustained development. Our leaders were encouraged by the extremely positive international response to the emergency, and hope that similar international support will be provided to address the recovery and longer-term problems.

First and foremost, our leaders reiterated that responsibility for the development of Africa rests with its people and Governments. To this end they committed themselves to exert all the national and regional efforts necessary to achieve that goal. Operative paragraph 1, which takes note of the outcome of the twenty-first Organization of African Unity summit meeting, is intended to underline the above stated commitment and efforts, and to highlight the main priority areas as seen by the Africans themselves.

In paragraph 2, the Assembly decides to convene a special session at ministerial level on the critical economic situation in Africa. We have proposed that the session start on 28 April 1986.

(Mr. Seereekissoon, Mauritius)

We expect that the session would last for one week. The date was chosen in order to allow for full preparation for the session.

Paragraph 3 indicates in general the focus of the special session, namely, the rehabilitation and medium and long-term problems facing Africa. Of those the most important, as reflected both in the Declaration of this Assembly adopted last year and the Declaration and Priority Action Programme adopted by the OAU summit in July this year, are food and agriculture, debt and the related issue of resource flows and export earnings, and the infrastructure and other supporting sectors. It is our hope that the session will result in concrete action to address these problems.

In paragraph 4 the General Assembly decides to establish a Preparatory Committee for the special session. It is our understanding that that Committee would hold a number of limited meetings in the few weeks immediately preceding the session to allow for consultations and negotiations on the outcome of the session, since a one week session would not be enough for that task. To facilitate the work of the Committee, the Secretary-General is requested in paragraph 5 to provide all necessary support and services to the Committee.

Paragraph 6 deals with the documentation for the Preparatory Committee and the special session. The paragraph is clear with regard to the directive to the Secretary-General. We expect that all relevant components of the United Nations system would provide inputs in their areas of competence. The reports should focus primarily on the issues I have elaborated on in relation to operative paragraph 3 of the draft.

Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 deal with the emergency situation and the responses to it. The international response and that of the Secretary-General and the United Nations system is commended in those paragraphs. Through those paragraphs we wish to convey our appreciation to individuals, groups of artists, governmental and

(Mr. Seereekissoon, Mauritius)

non-governmental organizations and Governments of all countries who have responded to the emergency. We wish also to convey our gratitude to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 for their continuing support. Our appreciation also goes to the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) and to Mr. Bradford Morse and his dedicated team, both at headquarters and in the field. Since the emergency is not yet over, the Secretary-General and OEOA are expected to monitor the situation and to ensure the concerted response of the system and the international community to the emergency.

In conclusion, the African Group expresses the hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. The group is ready to enter into consultations with all interested countries to facilitate the expeditious adoption of the draft.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): The Assembly is meeting here today with three major purposes in mind: first, to recognize the magnitude of the crisis confronting the people of the afflicted areas of Africa; secondly, to acknowledge the vital assistance provided during past months, first by Governments working both bilaterally and through multilateral agencies, secondly by non-governmental organizations and thirdly, and by no means least importantly, by private individuals to alleviate and overcome the suffering and misery caused by this crisis; and finally to rededicate ourselves as members of the international community to renewed effort for the survival and advancement of the people of the afflicted areas of Africa.

The crisis facing much of Africa is of unparalleled dimensions. I echo the words of the United Nations Development Programme's Administrator, who also heads the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA), Mr. Bradford Morse. In March this year he stated to the Pledging Conference:

"The crisis afflicting Africa is without doubt the most massive catastrophe visited on this planet. More people may die as a result of this situation than died in World War I."

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

Now, nine months after those remarks were made in this chamber, we have the opportunity to evaluate the response which has been forthcoming. That response has been in most ways reassuring. We must acknowledge here the considerable efforts of the international community and of African countries themselves in reducing the suffering and giving new hope to millions across the continent, but much remains to be done.

Speakers before me here and on other occasions during this General Assembly session have outlined and analysed the nature of Africa's problems. It is accepted that responsibility for a large portion of the suffering is attributable to natural causes, specifically the prolonged drought - some parts of the continent have experienced severe drought for almost two decades, with only intermittent respite - but it is now also widely accepted, not least by the most seriously affected African nations, that responsibility for much of the crisis must be placed firmly on mankind's shoulders.

It is acceptance of this reality that has enabled relief and rehabilitation efforts to be most effectively targeted. A combination of policy adjustments on the part of individual African countries, aimed at rectifying previous social and economic imbalances, and a massive infusion of international relief and rehabilitation assistance now gives us cause for hope that the catastrophe we all feared may not wreak its full vengeance on that continent.

Hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved. Men, women and, particularly children, who started this year with no real hope of seeing the end of it now have a chance. The recommitment I spoke of earlier must be to ensure that this chance is turned into a worthwhile future, not merely a life which, in the words of the philosopher, is "nasty, brutish and short".

I have referred to the international community's commitment to Africa. Through the crucial months of 1984 and into this year, food supplies and other

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

essential relief items have been distributed to the most needy. There have been times when delivery systems have been stretched to the limit - they are not perfect and sometimes they have failed - but we recognize that the tasks confronting relief efforts have been immense. To a remarkable extent the problems have been met. We must pay tribute to those who battled to achieve what seemed impossible: to get food and shelter to the starving and homeless and to the sick and dying.

A crucial factor in this struggle has been the partnership between the international donor community and the affected States in Africa. There were times, I have to say, at the start of the international relief effort when aspects of this partnership came under severe strain. It was, for example, difficult to understand why local transport so desperately needed to ensure that food reached distant areas remained idle on occasion for want of total commitment to the alleviation of suffering. That is the sort of thing it is sometimes difficult to explain to the public everywhere in the world.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

I wish to mention specifically the key role played by the Secretary-General and by this Organization itself in focusing international attention on the African crisis. This is referred to in the draft resolution that has just been introduced, and we endorse it. The Secretary-General's initiative in establishing a special emergency trust fund for Africa, his appeal for support to the international community and the setting up of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa are all excellent examples of the pivotal role of the United Nations in international affairs. We must also point out that the international media played a quite crucial role. We pay a tribute to them.

I have referred to the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa and its head, Mr. Bradford Morse. New Zealand has a very high regard for the work of that Office and for the small and dedicated team of men and women who staff it. As befits an emergency relief organization set up to do a specific job within a short time frame, it could perhaps best be termed, with due deference to the man who heads it, lean but muscular. As one of the first countries to contribute to the Secretary-General's emergency fund, we have appreciated the manner in which the Office has ensured that funds are passed quickly to areas of greatest need. In the absence of on-the-ground bilateral missions ourselves in Africa, we would not have been able to become so fully involved in the famine relief work without that Office's help. We commend its performance and note particularly its excellent record of co-operation with Governments on the spot and with the specialist relief and development agencies working in Africa.

The crisis confronting Africa has touched the international community deeply. It has evoked a warm response. Assistance pledged by Governments - food, equipment, medical supplies, housing and so on - has flooded in. In the past 18 months the New Zealand Government has provided around 5 million New Zealand dollars to a variety of relief, rehabilitation and development programmes, most of them under United Nations auspices.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

That is on the Government level, but I want to make a point of referring to a second and equally vital form of response - what one might call people-to-people aid. In this country, the United States, and in the United Kingdom several months ago we witnessed the combined Band Aid and Live Aid rock concerts which were televised live to many parts of the world. Individual citizens in New Zealand gave NZ\$4.5 million on one day alone to that appeal for African relief. They did it because they had been touched by the suffering; it was their way of showing they cared. Before that they showed their concern in a different way. Individuals, religious groups and various charitable organizations banded together to charter a cargo ship and fill it with food and relief supplies. The ship, the Ngahere, visited ports throughout New Zealand collecting food, agricultural machinery needed for development work, medical supplies and other items required to fight famine. It was manned by New Zealand unionists on a volunteer basis. It sailed to Port Sudan, where it discharged its cargo.

The message of the Ngahere and its cargo is important. This was not cheque-book aid, Government-to-Government stuff, paid for by impersonal tax dollars. This came directly out of the pockets of individual citizens, people from every walk of life. They had been touched by the tragedy facing other human beings on the far side of the globe. I would simply reaffirm the continuing support of New Zealand and New Zealanders in the ongoing relief and development needs of Africa.

I would conclude by noting that the focus of my comments has been on Africa's relief and development needs and the response these have drawn from the international community. This should not in any way be construed as downplaying other aspects of the critical economic situation confronting that continent. Others have addressed the issues of debt and structural adjustment.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

May I say in closing that New Zealand fully acknowledges the resolve of African nations to return to a sound and balanced economic situation. For this to be done the continent's debt burden must be alleviated. Its severity and the limited options available to many African nations to trade their way to prosperity in the foreseeable future reinforce the need for new and flexible approaches by all parties to the current situation. Reality and common sense must prevail if the affected nations of Africa are to be able to build on the efforts of recent months. Let us commit ourselves to making this happen.

Like the representative of Japan, who preceded me at this rostrum, I can confirm that my delegation will support the call that has just been made by the representative of Mauritius in introducing the draft resolution for a special session of the Assembly on this subject next year. Let us prepare meticulously for that session; let us also look beyond the immediate relief operation to the phase of rehabilitation, to preventing a recurrence of what has happened and to the long-term redevelopment phase. It is entirely appropriate for this Organization to provide a forum for co-ordinating these longer-term but fundamental operations.

Mr. HOGUE (Australia): This is the second year in which the critical economic situation in Africa has been addressed by the General Assembly. At this time last year the world community was galvanized into action by the realization of the extent of the human suffering caused by the widespread drought in much of sub-Saharan Africa. This action was manifested not only in the unanimous adoption of the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa by this body but by a concerted response by the international community to meet the needs generated by the drought. Continued world-wide publicity about the tragedy in Africa has ensured that increased international awareness has been translated into an impressive flow of both official and private funds to assist in relieving the immediate impact of the drought.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

My delegation believes it is fair to say that Australia has responded generously to the food crisis in Africa. While our response has been predominantly through the provision of emergency food aid and by strong support for international agencies active in the field, as a bilateral donor Australia has also provided assistance, including food for emergency feeding programmes and for food-for-work projects in land reclamation and reforestation. The combined effect of the international response has been, as noted recently by the Director of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA), to help avert a major catastrophe in 1985, which might have resulted in the loss of millions of lives. My delegation would like here to acknowledge the efforts of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa in seeking enhanced co-ordination of the response of the United Nations system to the African crisis. We believe that OEOA has made a very real contribution to ensuring that the human suffering associated with the crisis has been minimized by coherence in the response of the United Nations system. We should like to acknowledge the vital role played not only by Mr. Morse, Director of OEOA, but also by Mr. Jansson during his term as Assistant Secretary-General for Emergency Operations in Africa.

The situation Africa faces today is both different to, and yet the same as, that faced when we discussed this issue 12 months ago. As noted in the most recent status report on the emergency situation in Africa, which was produced by OEOA, rains have come in most places and the current drought seems to have abated, at least for this year. Problems of course remain. In many parts of the continent, harvests are still not in and relief needs continue to be acute. Even where harvests have been carried out, new problems such as crop destruction by insects and birds are arising. However, there is now an atmosphere of hope that the most severe period of drought is behind us. In this sense the situation today is different from that of 12 months ago. If the critical economic situation in

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

Africa were simply a consequence of the recent drought, we would be justified in facing the future with some optimism. The truth, of course, is that, while the recent drought magnified and exacerbated the economic difficulties in Africa, these difficulties stem from causes both more complex and more deep-rooted than the drought. It is in this sense that the situation before us is the same as in 1984.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

The report of the Secretary-General (A/40/372 and Add.1 and 2) makes it clear that Africa is a continent ravaged by the accumulated impact of demographic and political pressures, creeping desertification, deep-seated structural problems, inappropriate agricultural policies, particularly pricing policies, and an unfavourable international economic climate reflecting in part distortions in the world markets for the primary products on which African countries rely for foreign exchange. The international community has a clear obligation to address the African situation in an attempt to formulate concerted action to assist African countries in overcoming the crisis caused by these factors. This is not simply some theoretical exercise in multilateralism; it is an essential prerequisite and must be undertaken successfully if the human suffering associated with this crisis is to be averted. While in the immediate future the most urgent needs of Africa require swift emergency aid, the international community should now be looking ahead to policies of long-term assistance to prevent food aid dependency and re-establish the social and economic infrastructure of drought-stricken countries.

My delegation believes from statements made during this debate that there is now a general understanding that attention must be focused beyond the short-term emergency situation to prospects of, and policies for, longer-term growth and development in the region. We believe that the longer-term growth and development of sub-Saharan African countries will depend in large part on effective policies of resource use and structural adjustment. This will require a concerted effort by donor nations to provide long-term rehabilitative assistance to the region. It will also, as accepted inter alia in the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in July, require action by African Governments themselves.

Of paramount importance in overcoming the constraints on future development in the region are effective policies in the agricultural sector. My delegation has been heartened to note the recent improvements in food production performance in a

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number of African countries, largely reflecting the priority accorded by them to the agricultural sector in the development of national policies and the allocation of national resources. We have welcomed the commitment in the OAU summit Declaration to increase the proportion of public investment allocated to agriculture to 20 to 25 per cent. In a situation where emergency assistance requirements will continue at least for the immediate future, we believe that the development of national food security strategies designed to accelerate the contribution of national agricultural sectors can have a significant impact on longer-term prospects. National food security strategies are also important in ensuring that emergency food aid does not itself depress domestic agricultural sectors by acting as a disincentive to local production through the maintenance of artificially low prices, by encouraging a change in consumption patterns or by enabling Governments to avoid taking the often hard policy decisions necessary to improve their own agricultural performance. Such strategies also help counter an incipient trend in the use of emergency food aid for market penetration, whereby food aid becomes a tool for the donor's trade strategy rather than a means of assisting the recipient. Australia has always argued in favour of an effective multilateral discipline that would ensure that food aid both provides appropriate relief in emergency situations and contributes to the development of recipient countries.

There are, sadly, no easy solutions to the critical economic situation in Africa. While the overall situation in many sub-Saharan African countries is depressingly similar, there is, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report (A/40/372), a different mix of problems in each country. While global solutions to the situation are appealing as an easy panacea, effective solutions will be found only through a country-level approach which recognizes the individual problems of each country.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

My delegation therefore has some lingering doubts on whether a special session of the General Assembly to consider the critical economic situation in Africa represents the most practical way of developing an effective international response to this situation, particularly if it were to risk cutting across present institutional arrangements. However, we recognize that there is a need to ensure not only cohesion but also co-ordination in this international response. In particular, my delegation believes that there is a need to ensure that the sort of co-ordination developed in the United Nations system's response to the emergency situation - largely as a result of the operation of OECD - is continued in that system's response to the underlying structural problems.

My delegation is therefore prepared to support the proposal for a special session of the General Assembly in the hope not only that this session will identify practical action-oriented measures to address the underlying structural problems in Africa but that those measures will be part of a co-ordinated response to the African crisis. We look forward to participating actively in the careful preparation necessary to ensure that the special session is able to achieve these goals.

Mr. AL-MOHAMED (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): For the second successive year the General Assembly is considering the critical economic situation in Africa. This is a shining example of what the international will can achieve when it takes the right direction. This year there have been a number of encouraging attempts to tackle this problem, the most important of which has been the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, effective 1 January 1985. This year has also seen the convening of the International Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa, which met in Geneva last March. There have also been the activities of the other United Nations organs and agencies, especially the United Nations Development

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Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which are very valuable and encouraging. While the international community has achieved some progress in stemming the tide of famine, malnutrition, disease and poverty in Africa, much still needs to be done, especially in the basic health sectors, in the stricken areas.

The advent of some rain does not mean the end of this crisis, for the danger of famine caused by drought and desertification is not a transient phenomenon that can be removed overnight. Therefore the relief operations should remain in place and endeavour to help the stricken peoples to rely once again on their own efforts.

My country has always maintained ties of close friendship with most African countries, especially those located in the eastern part of the continent. Since the advent of our renaissance in 1970, Oman has developed and strengthened these relations in all fields. When the African countries were stricken with drought and desertification we spared no effort in assisting them to take the appropriate measures to face that hardship. Together with our brothers the other members of the Council of Co-operation of Arab Gulf States, which concluded its sixth summit meeting yesterday in my country's capital, we have done everything possible to alleviate the sufferings of our African brethren, who have suffered an experience the like of which has seldom been known in history and whose consequences can still be seen in the social and economic sectors of the stricken countries.

(Mr. Al-Mohamed, Oman)

We are gratified and pleased to note the progress the African countries have made in overcoming this crisis, thus showing their determination to rely on their own efforts. In spite of the difficult economic conditions prevailing in the sub-Saharan African countries, those countries have made genuine adjustment efforts that deserve our admiration and praise. Thanks to such efforts at both the national and the international levels, as well as to some additional measures, those countries have been able to reduce their balance-of-payments deficits from \$25 billion in 1981-1982 to \$11 billion in 1984. Although deficit reduction has been less than that achieved in other regions, in view of the difficult economic conditions in the sub-Saharan African countries the reduction achieved is commendable and worthy of support and encouragement.

We agree with preceding speakers who have stated that a proper treatment of the critical economic situation in Africa should go beyond merely averting the threat and distress of famine. Indeed, such efforts should be focused on reactivating economic growth, without which all the efforts made up until now will have been mere palliatives. That fact, as well as the fact that according to demographic projections the population of the African continent will reach 690 million people by the year 2000, should prompt the international community to ensure that the economies of the sub-Saharan African countries are not allowed to deteriorate, and to adopt appropriate measures to stimulate the economic development process, while devising appropriate solutions to the social, economic and development needs of those countries.

We would like to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted on the critical economic situation in Africa, document A/40/372 and Add. 1 and 2. We share his view that the effects of the advent of some rain in the drought-stricken African countries will be limited unless important agricultural inputs are provided. We also agree with him that the advent of some rain does not

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mean that the affected countries will not continue to need relief assistance from the international community. According to the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 1984, the international community has a humanitarian duty to undertake the necessary measures to relaunch the development process in Africa by providing the necessary funds, by providing advice on the modernization of agricultural practices at all levels, by making efforts to combat desertification and to rehabilitate industrial projects in Africa, and by taking account of the social aspects of development in order to ensure a better future for our African brothers. Their ordeal is ours, and we must work together to end it.

Mr. BEIN (Israel): Five hundred million human beings, 14 per cent of the world's population, today live in a state of undernourishment. Millions of people die of hunger every year. Many thousands of Africans know that if this situation does not change soon - and drastically - this will be the last year of their lives.

This session of the General Assembly is dealing with 145 agenda items, many of which are outdated, repetitious and counter-productive in relation to our common goal: advancing towards a better world free of war, terrorism, hunger and misery. Although the critical economic situation in Africa is the real issue, only one agenda item deals with it. This, however, should be the centre of our efforts and deliberations.

Many of the African nations and peoples are facing horrible immediate danger. It is not a political danger. It is a danger which transcends politics or ideology. It is a danger which engulfs us all, a danger which today is acute in Africa, but which could spread and spill over to many nations on other continents. It is a potential world catastrophe. We must act quickly and together.

Today's famine in Africa is surely one of the worst that continent has ever experienced. If we do not act immediately, by the year 2000 we shall face a world of nightmares. By the year 2000 the population of the world will reach 6 billion

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people. If we do not act immediately, land degradation resulting from unattended land erosion may reduce the cultivated and productive agricultural areas by about one sixth of today's total - this, while the agricultural output required to feed 6 billion human beings will be 50 per cent to 60 per cent greater than it is today.

The report of the Secretary-General proves that some serious programmes of assistance have been initiated. Israel believes, however, that this is not enough, and that assistance and development support in the last decade have not been sufficiently effective in developing traditional agriculture.

Rural communities the world over, particularly in Africa, lack the financial resources, as well as the know-how, to replenish soil nutrients. They therefore produce low-yield output, and the area of cultivated land per capita is very limited. The same reasons cause land degradation and wind and surface erosion brought about by inadequate cultivation, coupled with over-grazing and mono-crop culture.

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This is a vicious circle which must be broken - first by moving from traditional agriculture towards a secure, stable and sedentary one. The rural population has to be convinced that that will be much more profitable. They must not only continue with traditional agriculture but also make efforts to move towards non-traditional crops, including cash crops. They should also attempt to improve their cultivation techniques and should not overlook the importance of post-harvest input.

The problem facing us is how to motivate those communities caught up in the labyrinth of hunger and drought, insecurity and instability, natural and political calamities - how to convince them to break this vicious circle. We must act now. There is no time for more conferences, useless deliberations. There must be action - immediate action - lest the soil degradation will grow and the epidemic of hunger will spill over to more countries and communities.

At the Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa convened by the Secretary-General in Geneva in March this year, Israel, through the Director-General of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented some guidelines for possible solutions. These guidelines are based on Israel's own experience. Israel is regarded by many experts in the field as a natural laboratory for development. Why? Because Israel is young; only 37 years have passed since we regained our independence. During this short time our experts have succeeded in transforming the country from a situation of complete austerity and semi-hunger, through rapid development stages with an annual growth rate of 10 per cent, to the stage in which we find ourselves today producing practically all the food we need and indeed exporting surpluses of completely new and innovative crops to distant lands.

All this was done in a country which is classified as being situated in a semi-arid zone, with an average annual rainfall of 500 millimetres; and this

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rainfall is unequally divided, with over half of Israel's area receiving less than 180 millimetres of rain annually.

We had to develop our agriculture in conditions similar to those of many African countries. Israel has practically no natural resources; although we do have an abundance of holiness, we do not, unfortunately, have any oil. We had, therefore, to rely on the only resource we have - the human resource - our people.

Many international experts predicted that in the semi-arid area of the Middle East it would take at least one generation - 25 years - in order to double food production. This is true for many of the countries in the area. However, Israel has not only doubled its food production; it has multiplied it twelvefold. This has been done in the last two decades. We have done this with the only resource we have, the human resource.

Israel's national movement, Zionism, is based on ideas of equality and sharing. Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, at the very beginning of this century called on us to help our brethren in Africa in order to enable them to free themselves from prejudice and persecution. We, therefore, have always seen it as our duty to share with developing countries our know-how, which we have acquired by trial and error. I am proud to say that I speak from first-hand experience and knowledge, as in recent years, as Israel's Director for International Co-operation, I was personally involved in planning and implementing programmes of technical assistance to many countries in Africa and elsewhere.

In the 26 years of our involvement in international development efforts we co-operated with more than a hundred countries and trained over 50,000 men and women from developing countries. These young men and women were trained in different disciplines, with special emphasis on agriculture, rural community development, health, education and co-operatives.

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Israel has developed know-how in some fields which are of specific relevance to drought-stricken areas. These include increasing rainfall, including cloud seeding, moisture conservation in rain-fed farming and higher production in irrigated perimeters. In the semi-arid Negev region major research was carried out in water harvesting and moisture conservation programmes that could effectively be applied to isolated low-density rural communities in Africa's semi-arid and drought-prone areas.

Two-thirds of Israel's water consumption is derived from ground sources developed during the last three decades. This technology, applied successfully in Israel, may be utilized in developing small and medium-sized irrigation projects, far away from perennial rivers. It could be put into effect without extensive financial resources and the long delays involved in the construction of major dams and canal systems. These ideas, it seems to us, should be coupled with measures preventing soil erosion and encouraging sedentary farming in low-cost settlements, while at the same time ensuring basic service availability and introduction of double-cropping practices, using relatively low farm inputs and partial irrigation.

Guided credit as well as extension systems could be developed with the assistance of public and private intervention, as this would secure markets for the agricultural produce while also providing post-harvest facilities and low-cost irrigation systems - and all this within comparatively small subregional development plans.

Israel's own rapid development experience has proved the success of this phase of integrated rural development. Scarcity of water and soil in Israel motivated optimum use of these resources with the aim of attaining optimum yields. To substitute for the scarcity of material resources, emphasis was put on the development in all its aspects of the human factor, the human resource. Training

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in all levels of the agricultural hierarchy, including the development of extension systems, is, up to this date, the basis of Israel's success in the evolution of its agriculture. Israel's farmer can be ranked among the best trained in the world - and its extension service serves as an example to many developing countries.

We in Israel believe that these guidelines based on our own development experience are viable and adaptable to a great number of countries in Africa and elsewhere. However, the acute famine in some countries also calls for an immediate response. Israeli experts, therefore, are currently developing more efficient food aid delivery systems which will provide a much higher protein and caloric intake. At the same time these systems would link such aid with the regional land and water resource development programmes mentioned earlier.

A change of direction is urgently needed in the goals of international development. That is the challenge of this decade. This goal can be reached despite the scarcity of arable land and water and despite the meager resources that are available in various countries.

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We believe that in the field of development there is a true challenge to world-wide co-operation. Let us unite in a true spirit of brotherhood. Let us be our brothers' keepers. Together let us encourage development that will break the vicious circle of poverty, erosion and degradation of agricultural land in Africa and the rest of the developing world. Let us also unite to develop the world's major resource - the human resource.

Israel is already engaged in a number of projects in Africa. We feel duty bound to share the fruits of our experience with our brethren in Africa. We are not rich in financial resources; we are, however, rich in experience and human resources. Our successes are many, but we have also made mistakes. We can help our friends in Africa not to repeat our mistakes.

Israel is a reservoir of goodwill and shares a spirit of brotherhood with the peoples of Africa. We cannot help with budgets but we can share our experiences and shall endeavour to do so. Israel proposes therefore to enter into immediate discussions regarding problems of drought and food production with each and every country in Africa and elsewhere that so wishes.

Let me conclude by quoting from the statement made to this forum last year by Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yitzhak Shamir:

"Israel calls upon all Governments to set aside political differences and narrow economic interests to join forces in the campaign against hunger. Israel will continue to co-operate with other nations in technology and development and stands ready to join other Governments, international agencies and non-governmental organizations in working to meet this great challenge to humanity". (A/39/PV.18, p.41)

Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica): The continuation of the economic crisis in Africa and its deleterious consequences for a continent and a people with which my country has the closest of ties has impelled my delegation to participate once again in the

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debate on this item. We believe that it is vital that the momentum which has been generated by previous discussions of the crisis in this forum and elsewhere be maintained and even increased. The past year has shown commendable generosity and will on the part of the international community in dealing with the critical economic situation in Africa. But this past year has also shown the magnitude of the problem and has impressed upon us all the fact that Africa requires most of all not short-term, media-generated assistance - welcome and desirable as that is - but sustained, concentrated longer-term efforts to resolve serious structural problems and to promote growth and development.*

Overall, the response of the international community to the emergency needs of Africa is to be applauded. We note the role played not only by Governments and the United Nations system itself but by many non-governmental organizations. Jamaica would wish in particular to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his unstinting efforts and to commend the work of the Office for Emergency Operations in carrying out the difficult task of mobilizing and co-ordinating relief assistance for millions of people over widely scattered areas. These efforts have saved lives. They have eased the suffering of millions, particularly in the 21 countries most seriously affected by the drought and by food shortages. Furthermore, we are heartened by the reports that improved climatic conditions are likely to result in better harvests this year and in a relative improvement of the emergency situation in some countries. We note, however, that conditions in other countries, such as the Sudan and Ethiopia, remain critical and that overall the crisis is very much still with us. As has become obvious, the coming of the rains

*Mr. Marinescu (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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has also had the effect of focussing attention on unmet needs in important areas other than food, such as health and sanitation and transport equipment, and on water projects.

This only serves to emphasize that assistance to Africa must be sustained and continuous. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has observed that

"Tragic and devastating as it is, the current emergency situation is nothing but one manifestation of a more pervasive, deep-rooted and debilitating crisis of development in Africa".

We concur fully with that view. Indeed if anything of value can be salvaged from a ravaging crisis such as the present one it must be the welcome focus on the long-term development of Africa, which, while always at the forefront of African concerns, is now being viewed with what appears to be a greater sense of urgency than in the past, both within and outside Africa. In fact, the focus on long-term development has been increasingly the theme of discussions on the current crisis.

We need only cite the recent Second Special Memorandum of the ECA Conference of Ministers on International Action for Relaunching the Initiative for Long-Term Development and Economic Growth in Africa, the Declaration on the Economic Situation in Africa, and the Five-Year Priority Programme, adopted in July last by the twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity; and - if I may be permitted to go back five years - the seminal Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. The road to Africa's development has been adequately mapped; the challenge now is to apply the will and the resources.

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We might note in the latter context certain favourable developments such as discussions in respect of the use of trust fund resources that took place recently in Seoul and that promise to be of benefit to many African countries, and the establishment of the Special Facility for Sub-Saharan Africa by the World Bank in July last.

The immediate prospects for Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan countries that have been affected by drought, are not good. Quite apart from the death and disruption caused by adverse climatic conditions, those countries were among the most severely affected by the prolonged international recession and now labour under the burden of debt and collapsing commodity markets. Growth in sub-Saharan Africa averaged only 1.5 per cent in 1984. Although projections are for slightly better performance in 1985 and 1986, per capita incomes are not expected to rise. Jamaica fully supports the proposal of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly be held to consider in depth the critical economic situation in Africa.

I would conclude by affirming the solidarity of the Government and people of Jamaica with Africa in the current economic crisis. Jamaica believes that it is in the interest of all peoples on all continents that Africa, with its considerable human and physical resources and its obvious economic potential, not be allowed to languish in a parlous state of underdevelopment. For the benefit of its people and humanity, the potential of Africa must be unlocked. The international community must find the will and resources needed to support on a sustained basis the efforts of African Governments and peoples to transform the continent into a major growth pole in the international economy. We believe, indeed, that this is one of the essential requirements of a more enlightened world economic order.

Mr. THIOUNN PRASITH (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French):

The crisis that is shaking the world economy at the end of the century continues to worsen in the developing countries, in particular the poorest of them, many of which are in Africa. The unequal and precarious economic recovery that some industrialized countries have been experiencing since the end of the long, deep recession of 1980-82 has not permitted the developing countries in general, much less the least developed, to resume their economic development.

According to economic and social indicators, Africa, which has half the world's land-locked countries, three quarters of the least developed and most disadvantaged countries and the largest concentrations of refugees and displaced persons, is seriously affected by the uncertainty and negative effects that characterize the world economy today. Most of the African countries, obliged to slow or even completely cease their development activities as a result of the collapse of commodity prices, the stagnation and decrease in the real value of official development assistance, the rise in protectionism and heavy indebtedness, have experienced a significant decline in standards of living in recent years. Some of them face economic bankruptcy, with disastrous consequences politically and in terms of economic and social development. The annual rate of economic growth of the least developed countries of Africa declined from 2.5 per cent in 1975-80 to 0.8 per cent in 1981-84.

To those unfavourable factors originating from outside, which it is beyond the ability of the African peoples and Governments to deal with, are added unfavourable climatic conditions. Drought persists and continues to ravage Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Although in some regions the rains are almost reaching their usual levels, they have come too late. Already the people are in refugee camps, leaving their villages because their fields have become barren and their cattle have died off. Desertification continues to wreak havoc, eating away 60,000 to

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70,000 square kilometres of arable land each year. In addition, Africa periodically suffers other natural disasters, such as cyclones and floods caused by heavy rain.

The combination of those factors has gravely upset the economic and social development of the African countries and caused the most disastrous economic situation in the recent history of the continent. The consequences and repercussions of that tragic state of affairs, within individual countries as well as on the continental scale, have already been relevantly highlighted in the Secretary-General's report and in the second special memorandum adopted by the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa. More than 1 million of our African brothers and sisters have already died; 10 million others have been thrown on to the roads, forced by famine and disease to leave their homes and ancestral villages in search of food and water; 20 African countries south of the Sahara are still affected by drought, nine of them very seriously. In all, more than 30 million people are in danger of dying. The ecosystems that have nourished life for centuries and made Africa the symbol of fertility, the continent of plenty, have now collapsed. Such is the scale of the economic crisis in Africa, which has provoked large internal upheavals, extending even beyond the borders of the countries concerned and constituting in the long run a threat to the survival of the African peoples and their civilization.

Faced with that situation, which has dealt a crushing blow to their already fragile economies, the African countries have on many occasions reaffirmed their determination to adopt ways and means to take up the challenge. The Heads of State and Government of the African countries recently reiterated that

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"the development of our continent is the primary responsibility of our Governments and peoples. We are, therefore, determined to take concrete actions and measures individually and collectively for the achievement of the economic development of our continent". (A/40/666, p. 4)

President Kountché, of Niger, has emphasized that

"Africans do not give up easily. Many that had sown their fields three or four times in a single year in the hope that the rains would come and there would be a crop; it was only when there was no more seed that they left."

The Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, the Harare Declaration and the special memorandums of the Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, to give just a few examples, show the determination and courageous efforts of the African peoples and Governments, as well as the concrete measures adopted, to take up the twofold challenge of meeting the immediate needs of millions of men, women, children and old people and preventing the spread of famine and disease, while at the same time ensuring long-term economic development and growth.

It is understandable that, faced with that disastrous situation, recourse should first be had to immediate measures, since the lives of millions of people are seriously affected by the famine and the other natural disasters. In that regard it is heartening to note that, in response to the earnest appeal of Africa, Governments, individuals throughout the world and the organs and institutions of the United Nations have made considerable efforts to come to the aid of the countries affected. Thanks to their humanitarian assistance and good co-ordination between the countries affected and international bodies and institutions, significant progress has been made in containing the ravages of famine, disease and malnutrition. The creation of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa early this year and the convening of the International Conference on the Emergency

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Situation in Africa, on the initiative of the Secretary-General - to whom my delegation pays a sincere tribute for his tireless and unswerving dedication to the ideals and principles of the Charter - have proved very beneficial. They make it possible to ensure the mobilization and use of considerable resources and continue to make the international community aware of the poverty in which Africa is labouring and the emergency measures needed to end that situation.

However, it is essential to link the present world reaction to the emergency in Africa to the long-term economic development and growth needs of the continent if the international community wishes to attack the problem at its roots. In this connection, the African Heads of State and Government have rightly stressed that emergency aid will be needed only for a certain time, whereas the bulk of the efforts should be directed to longer-term development in order to prevent the crisis recurring or becoming permanent.

President Abdou Diouf, of Senegal, addressing the Assembly on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), said that "the problem must be attacked at its roots" (A/40/PV.42, p. 24). While the reactions to the African economic crisis of Governments, individuals and various agencies in meeting immediate needs have been on the whole very effective and most praiseworthy, much remains to be done to help in the restructuring of the African economies.

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Thus, additional resources should be provided to enable the Governments and the peoples of Africa to tackle structural problems such as food and agricultural production, the struggle against drought and desertification, industrial development, the building of infrastructure, and other problems defined in the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act and reiterated by the Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa. The scope and complexity of the economic crisis of Africa are so great that in order to overcome it the Governments and the peoples of Africa are in much need of foreign assistance. Africa needs that international assistance to develop its immense wealth and natural potential, which remain unexploited below ground, on volcanic soil, in the sea and so forth. With regard to agriculture, Africa contains 800 million hectares of potentially arable land, of which only 170 million are at present used for agriculture.

The critical economic situation in Africa is not due to natural calamities alone. In fact, Africa is heavily burdened with a hostile external environment, an unjust and inequitable system of international economic relations, and inconsistent macro-economic policies. Among the critical economic variables which erect insurmountable obstacles to the economic and social development of African countries and which have even been threatening their political stability, the external debt problem is a source of grave concern. Africa's external debt, estimated at \$158 billion for 1984, is expected to exceed \$170 billion this year, and debt servicing will amount to more than 27 per cent of 1985 export earnings. The problem is all the more disturbing since, thus far, the major financial institutions have seemed to be deliberately excluding Africa from debt-negotiation machinery and since little importance has been attached by the international community to this problem. In this connection, my delegation supports the convening of an international conference on Africa's external indebtedness,

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as proposed by the OAU summit Conference and as supported by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1985, held last July. Such a conference would undoubtedly make it possible for African borrowers and lenders to engage in an exchange of views in order to find appropriate short, medium, and long-term solutions.

We therefore welcome with satisfaction the impending convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa. This will be a forum in which the industrialized countries, the African countries and the international institutions concerned can join in examining this problem with a view to finding appropriate solutions for the economic recovery of the continent.

For two years running, the Economic and Social Council has been addressing the critical economic situation in Africa as an item of the highest priority. Already, the international community has most generously and effectively saved millions of lives by providing timely and necessary humanitarian helpance. But we must now help our African brothers and sisters to energize and make more effective their economies with a view to building a better future. Last year, we explicitly entered into a historic commitment by adopting by consensus resolution 39/29 containing the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, which provides the basis for concerted action by the international community. It is now time to honour our commitment.

Democratic Kampuchea, a non-aligned least-developed country - which has also been the victim of an unimaginably devastating war of aggression and genocide - comprehends the full scope of the painful situation the African peoples and Governments are facing with courage, determination, tenacity and dignity. Despite its own difficulties and the grave problems threatening the very survival of its nation, its people and its civilization, my Government will always join in the

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praiseworthy efforts of the peoples and the Governments of Africa and by the international community to face the challenge. My Government has therefore always striven, within the limits imposed by its very modest means and by a difficult wartime situation, to participate, in response to the appeal by the Secretary-General, in the international Conference on emergency assistance to African countries, making a modest contribution as a token of its solidarity and unswerving fraternal friendship with the countries and the peoples of Africa.

Themselves the victims of a war of invasion and occupation, the people of Kampuchea and its Coalition Government have a deep sense of indignation at the aggressive policy of the racist régime of Pretoria, which is another major obstacle to the economic emancipation of the countries and the peoples of southern Africa, besides natural calamities and the unfavourable economic environment.

We remain convinced that the noble efforts and courage of the Governments and the peoples of Africa, and their determination individually and collectively to tackle the urgent critical situation of their countries will continue to be encouraged and actively and effectively supported by the whole international community. Indeed, as we have already stressed, it is not a question of altruism, but of a vital need born of world interdependence. At stake in this gigantic battle against this continent-wide scourge is not only the survival of millions of human beings - our African brothers and sisters - but also our dignity, the dignity of all other human beings, and world peace and stability, which we all desire to preserve in conformity with the United Nations Charter, whose fortieth anniversary we have just solemnly commemorated.

It is thus that we feel certain that draft resolution A/40/L.15, just introduced by the representative of Mauritius, will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. AKHTAR (Pakistan): A large number of countries in Africa are today faced with a critical economic situation, created by long spells of drought and compounded by a lack of timely and positive response from the international community. A region which until the 1970s was engaged in a battle for economic development is now fighting for survival.

The causes of the present situation in Africa are a combination of adverse climatic factors, world-wide economic recession creating a hostile external environment, and the adverse effects of colonization. The fragile economies of the affected countries have been shattered by drought and famine, necessitating a major change in the development programmes of those countries.

In the face of this grave challenge, the response of the African countries has been bold and imaginative. The Declaration and programme adopted by African Heads of State or Government last July at Addis Ababa is testimony to the courageous and practical manner in which they have sought to resolve their problems.

Many speakers preceding me have outlined the difficulties faced by the African people. These range from famine, desertification, starvation and a mounting debt burden to a bleak prospect for long-term economic and social development. They have also pointed out that a viable solution to a problem of such magnitude requires international co-operation and concentrated national effort.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that the international community has responded positively to the crisis in Africa. A large number of initiatives have been launched to channel short-term emergency assistance as well as long-term economic and technical assistance.

(Mr. Akhtar, Pakistan)

In this context we should like to commend the Secretary-General for the establishment of the Office of Emergency Operations in Africa which, under the leadership of Mr. Bradford Morse, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has been at the forefront of co-ordinating the response of the international community. The initiatives taken by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other government and non-governmental organizations are a reflection of the common resolve to stand by our African brothers at this critical time.

We are mindful of the fact that our response to the situation in Africa should not be limited to dealing with the emergency situation but must also simultaneously provide all necessary technical and economic assistance for the resumption of the programme for long-term economic development.

The Government and the people of Pakistan are fully conscious of the urgency and gravity of the problems facing Africa today. Let me assure members that as in the past the people of Pakistan stand with their African brothers and, despite their limited resources, are prepared to extend every possible assistance to relieve the distress caused by famine conditions in Africa.

Pakistan has already provided emergency assistance in the form of 7,500 tons of food-grain to the famine-affected countries and has pledged a further 10,000 tons of rice as its contribution towards meeting the famine situation in Africa.

In response to a widespread sentiment among the people of Pakistan to be associated with the efforts of the Government to assist the famine-affected countries in Africa, the President's Famine Relief Fund was established for receiving cash donations from the public. The Fund began its operations by receiving one day's salary from all Government officials, including employees of the national banks and of the public sector corporations. The proceeds from the Fund will be used to provide further assistance to the affected countries in Africa.

(Mr. Akhtar, Pakistan)

On 17 March 1985 Pakistan observed a day of solidarity with the famine-affected people of Africa, and the Department of Post and Telegraph of Pakistan is working on a special postage stamp to highlight Pakistan's concern for the critical situation in Africa.

In addition, the Government of Pakistan is currently examining a programme for medium- and long-term relief in the shape of technical and other assistance. The programme will be designed to meet the needs for developing infrastructure support for economic development in the affected countries.

We are confident that, true to their courageous and heroic tradition, the African people will, with the co-operation of the international community, be able to overcome the current crisis and put their countries on the road to progress, prosperity and economic development.

Let us assure them that they are not alone in this battle for survival and development. We will be with them every step of the way.

Mr. ZVEZDIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me to thank most sincerely all delegations that have congratulated us on our national holiday. Indeed, today, 7 November, we are commemorating the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The chain reaction of changes brought about by that Revolution radically changed the social face of the planet. A world system of socialism arose, colonial empires collapsed and on the political map of the world there appeared dozens of young independent States. Reflecting these objective processes was the adoption by the General Assembly of many important instruments on the principles of international relations. They include the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in which the General Assembly 25 years ago proclaimed the right of all nations to self-determination and independent economic development and condemned the policy of foreign domination and exploitation. The

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time that has elapsed since then has been a period of momentous liberation of the African continent from the colonial yoke, a move by the African peoples towards independent political development.

Recently the situation in Africa has again become a source of profound concern in the international community, and this, inter alia, has been reflected in the adoption of the General Assembly Declaration and the Economic and Social Council resolution on the critical economic situation in Africa. It would be naive to think that this crisis was exclusively the result of unfavourable climatic conditions or the demographic factor. Today there is no dearth of studies showing convincingly that the primary cause of the crisis is rooted in the colonial period, when the colonizers forcibly harnessed the emerging economy of Africa to their needs, disregarding the interests of the peoples of that continent.

Having inherited from the colonial period a low level of production development and complete dependence on commodities speculation on world markets and the general socio-economic backwardness, the young African States - even after they had won political independence - remained in an unequal situation: the system of international capitalist division of labour.

All attempts by African States to guarantee genuine economic independence met with the resistance of the imperialist Powers and their monopolies which deliberately developed a policy of exploitation of natural and human resources of Africa.

The Declaration on the economic situation in Africa, adopted at the twenty-first session of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), among the basic causes of the economic difficulties of the continent quite rightly named the worsening terms of trade and the drop in export earnings it caused, an unprecedented growth in interest rates and the sharp fluctuations in currency rates. As a result of those factors, the external debt of the African

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countries grew to an unprecedented level, which has bled white the already vulnerable economy of the continent. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculations, external debt servicing uses up from 30 per cent to 80 per cent of the export earnings of the countries of the continent. According to International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) data, 38 African countries south of the Sahara in 1985 alone will have to pay \$11.1 billion for debt servicing. All this has led to an outflow of financial resources from the African countries, the total volume of which, according to the Economic Commission for Africa, is more than \$9 billion a year.

As a result, the living standards of the people of Africa have been declining for about a decade now and will probably continue to decline to the end of the millennium. This is the real role that has been assigned to the African countries in the world capitalist economic system in the so-called free play of market forces.

However, the orchestrators of this "free play" not only refuse honestly to recognize their responsibility for the economic plight of Africa but, despite elementary logic, require the African countries fully to comply with this "market magic" and to give unlimited freedom to private enterprise and foreign capital. Furthermore, there are attempts to blame this critical situation on the African countries themselves, to explain it by mistakes in their national development plans, by their stressing the public sector in their economies, which, according to them, apparently prevents a "healthy" atmosphere in the market. We deem inadmissible and anti-human these attempts which seek to exploit the critical situation of the African countries in order to interfere in their internal and external policies and ultimately to block the process of the economic liberation of the continent.

(Mr. Zvezdin, USSR)

Naturally, we are worried that the credit institutions are being increasingly involved in this devious policy, in particular the IMF, which, as was stressed in plenary Assembly by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Nyerere, is being

"used by the wealthiest and most powerful nations for the international enforcement of their own economic policies on the under-developed countries of the world." (A/40/PV.13, p. 17)

(Mr. Zvezdin, USSR)

We cannot fail to mention the fact that many African countries also have been drawn into the arms race, which has been forced on them by imperialism, and bear a significant portion of the burden of the military expenditures. The actions of the fascist régime of Pretoria are a serious obstacle to the normal development of many African countries. The public hearings on transnational corporations held in September of this year in New York produced further indictments of the colonial policies of South Africa, which, with the support of its Western sponsors, primarily through the transnational corporations, has been trying to perpetuate the racist colonial system.

We support the recommendations of the public hearings panel on putting an end to the transnational corporations' support for the apartheid régime and its illegal occupation of Namibia. The General Assembly should call resolutely for the immediate implementation of those recommendations.

An analysis of the reasons for the economic difficulties that beset Africa shows that they are complex in nature and, of course, must be resolved in a comprehensive way. Drought and famine cannot be overcome by emergency measures alone. The Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) emphasizes that the present struggle to save lives and reduce the effects of hunger should not be the only focus of international support and co-operation and that we need to eradicate the reasons for the food and agricultural crisis in Africa. That precisely should be the focal point of the international community's efforts in working out a long-term solution to Africa's economic problems. In this context we support the OAU proposal that a special session of the General Assembly be convened on the economic situation in Africa.

On the whole we commend the efforts of the organizations in the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and public organizations to assist African countries, but we warn against attempts to take advantage of the use of the United

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Nations flag to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States, in connection with bilateral assistance, among other things. Unfortunately, such attempts can be detected in the work of some organizations, in particular the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa.

For the Soviet Union, co-operation with African countries and the provision of selfless assistance is not a one-time measure; it is a manifestation of the consistent policy of our State, which is not affected by transitory ebbs and flows. It was pursued during the period when the African continent was throwing off the colonial yoke and continues to the present time.

Today the representative of the United States gave some calculations - perhaps drawn up by himself - about assistance from the socialist countries to the African countries. Naturally they do not reflect the facts. At the same time I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that we did not detect in that statement a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the critical economic situation that is now being experienced by the African countries. Clearly there were some flaws there. He forgot to tell us that at the beginning of the 1980s the market-economy countries, particularly the United States, dealt a severe blow and did great damage to the African countries and that many years will be needed to overcome that. He forgot to tell us that the United States Administration is pursuing a policy of high interest rates and that the effect of that is the outflow of many millions of dollars from the African countries. He forgot to say a lot of things about the real reasons for the enormous difficulties now being faced by the African countries, which show convincingly that the damage done to them by the United States significantly decreases the size of the aid available.

The Soviet Union gives emergency and other assistance to the African countries, but the main point is that our co-operation with them is geared to the sphere of material production, particularly the development of industry. More than

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70 per cent of the total assistance given by us goes to that. That is one of the main ways to overcome economic backwardness. Over the past 10 years Soviet assistance to African countries has increased 5.5 times. With Soviet assistance African countries have completed more than 300 industrial projects; 286 sites are being built or designed. Significant assistance is given to the development of agriculture. For example, irrigated land which is being developed in Africa with Soviet assistance will be able to produce 7.7 million tonnes of grain a year.

The Soviet Union will continue in the future to give economic and political support and assistance to African countries in their struggle to achieve genuine economic independence and will do so in ways that reflect our social structure and within the limits of our capacity. We will continue also to seek a more active United Nations role in efforts to see to it that African countries gain genuine economic independence.

As has been emphasized by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade Gorbachev:

"It is the duty of the United Nations to do everything possible to promote a speeding up of the process of decolonization in the economic field and a restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis. The United Nations must raise its voice against the exploitation of the developing countries by the transnational monopolies, the plunder of their natural resources and the attempts to strangle them in a noose of debt."

The African States can always count on all-round assistance and support from the Soviet Union in their struggle for economic liberation and social progress.

Mr. JURASZ (Poland): May I first extend to the delegations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and through them to their Governments and peoples, my best fraternal wishes on the occasion of their National Day, the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

The case of Africa continues to be a painful reminder and, at the same time, a unique opportunity for the Members of the United Nations to get together to arrange a noble international operation to help bring about a sustained improvement of Africa's fate through the widely demanded changes in the existing unjust international economic order and through efforts to enable Africa to concentrate on peaceful reconstruction, rehabilitation and the elimination of the social, political and economic sources of the crisis.

The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, speaking at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, pointed out that

"During the past 12 months, socio-economic conditions in Africa have continued to be strongly influenced by adverse internal and external factors which have combined to aggravate the economic and social crisis facing the continent."

The solution of the problems should of necessity correspond to their nature.

One has to agree with the opinion of the Committee for Development Planning that:

"unless the roots of Africa's problems are more effectively addressed today, a succession of similar calamities is certain over the coming decades. It is absolutely critical that more vigorous efforts begin now towards the saving of Africa's future."

(Mr. Jurasz, Poland)

Some days ago the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mr. Eduard Saouma, stated in the Second Committee that the long-term development of Africa was largely blocked by adverse external - I repeat "external" - circumstances, particularly trade and indebtedness. Mr. Saouma presented the most convincing, I would even say alarming, statistical data, which we have to keep in mind in discussing the critical economic situation in Africa. These data include the following facts. From 1981 to 1983 the exports of the African countries shrank by 7 per cent in volume and by nearly 20 per cent in value. Export prices for most agricultural commodities have begun to drop sharply in the last 12 months, in some cases plummeting by as much as 20 to 30 per cent. A further decline in the terms of trade is predicted for the year 1985. An enormous debt of more than \$US 170 billion, representing more than 40 per cent of the African countries' gross domestic product, has been accrued. Over 30 per cent of their export earnings go to service this debt.

Behind statistical data concerning Africa and behind economic trends and tendencies a human drama of poverty, hunger, desperation and socio-political strife is unfolding.

The Geneva Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa, in March 1985, identified 20 countries as affected by the emergency. About 199 million people live in those countries and it was estimated that some 35 million were severely affected and that of those 10 million people had abandoned their homes and their lands in search of food, water and pasture for their herds.

We should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and Mr. Bradford Morse, as well as to Mr. Saouma, for their relentless efforts during the ongoing emergency operation in Africa.

Yesterday I had the honour to state in the Second Committee that the current debt crisis, as compared with past crises, has a new qualitative dimension: it affects the majority of the African countries. As is ably stated in the 1985

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report of the Trade and Development Board, debt overhang impinges not only on particular debtor countries and their creditors but also on the development process as a whole and on the trade and payment system. It is legitimate to say that the future of the world economy depends to a large extent on how this problem is resolved. This is even more true in the case of African countries. The debt-servicing possibilities of African countries are limited. The majority of African debtor countries have no possibilities of further import cuts or reductions in domestic consumption and investment. The debt crisis is thus a challenge for Africa as well as for the entire international community.

No wonder, therefore, that this acute problem has been raised in many forums, in particular in the United Nations system. The Government of Poland is of the opinion that the role of the United Nations in this field should be strengthened. It was in this spirit that my Head of State, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, in his address before the General Assembly a few weeks ago, proposed the idea of establishing, under the aegis of the Secretary-General, an international debt and development research centre. Such a centre, as an important forum of eminent experts and government representatives, would contribute significantly to the working out of an international strategy on debt and through this would increase the prestige of the United Nations.

My delegations joins all the representatives who have voiced their support for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

My country, which is recovering from the recession of 1979-82, has been doing its best within the limits of Poland's present possibilities to render emergency assistance to some African countries.

(Mr. Jurasz, Poland)

This assistance, in the form of food, medicine and clothing, is supplied by the Polish Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as by the Polish Red Cross and the national United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Committee. The Polish Flying Squadron has for months been delivering supplies to the most remote places in Ethiopia; it constitutes an integral part of the logistic relief operation.

Thousands of African young men and women have studied in Poland and tens of thousands of Poles, including medical teams, university teachers and technicians, have been assisting African countries. Poland has been steadily developing its economic and technical co-operation with many African countries and is ready to intensify and broaden it in the future.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The agenda item on the critical economic situation in Africa is of particular importance to Cuba. It is well known that my country is directing resources as large as its modest possibilities allow to assistance to African countries to overcome the present emergency and create longer-term conditions that will prevent the recurrence of the present situation and help African countries to advance towards accelerated and independent development.

The problems faced by Africa today have resulted from a variety of causes which have combined to create a truly alarming situation which materially affects millions of human beings.

First, the structures inherited from colonialism and consolidated by neo-colonial plundering have made more difficult and in many cases impeded the development of productive forces on the same scale as in other continents. Access to technology and the latest advances of science has been limited, as has the capacity to make use of them for developing the various branches of the economy.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

African societies, which are predominantly agrarian, single-crop societies, have been much more vulnerable to external imbalances and to the effects of an economic crisis without parallel in modern times. The unprecedented deterioration in the terms of trade of developing countries, the sudden drop in the prices of commodities, high bank interest rates, the stringent conditions imposed upon loans and the marked disequilibrium in the international monetary system are among the elements that have decisively affected the underdeveloped countries in recent years and whose effects have been felt with crushing force on the African continent.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Against this background, Africa's external debt, which is already reaching dramatic proportions, is no accident; rather it has been produced by an extremely hostile international economic environment which, combined with structures incapable of coping with it, does not suggest that any speedy or lasting solution is possible. In other words, the African countries today do not have the means to cope with their external debt which, for the continent as a whole, now represents nearly 40 per cent of its gross national product, whose servicing reached nearly \$10,000 million in 1984, and which absorbs a total of more than 30 per cent of its export earnings, and in many cases, more than 50 per cent.

Suffice it to recall the report recently presented at this session by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, who said:

"Africa is simply not in a position to finance its own development. It is hampered by an increasing and intolerable burden of debt. It is handicapped, as a trading partner, by the swing back to protectionism, and the depressed prices of raw materials. It remains the victim of financial markets where currencies fluctuate and interest rates are high. The decline of international aid on easy terms has hit it badly.

"Until these external constraints are removed, I am afraid that all attempts at recovery and mobilization by the African countries themselves will be to little or no avail.

"Structural adjustment policies intended to reduce government deficits have already led to a reduction in imports and drastic cuts in budgets. Investment programmes and consequently internal economic activity are also jeopardized: unemployment is spreading."

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

There can be no doubt that the African crisis is basically a crisis of development, but climatic conditions that brought about an unparalleled drought have enormously aggravated the situation and, above all, adversely affected access to food, which in itself already constituted a serious problem.

But if the general conditions on the African continent are critical, they assume the dramatic character of a struggle for existence in the countries of Africa situated below the Sahara. The report of the Secretary-General on this question brings to light data that demonstrate the dramatic character of this situation. In those countries, per capita income scarcely exceeds \$400 per year; life expectancy at birth is only 47 years - the lowest figure of any region in the world; only 25 per cent of the population has water that is fit to drink; the literacy rate of adults is below 30 per cent; infant mortality has been 50 per cent above that of the rest of the developing countries as a whole; approximately 100 million people suffer from serious malnutrition and hundreds of thousands die every year of hunger or because malnutrition has sapped their ability to resist disease. Of the 36 least developed countries in the world, 26 are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Together with this situation, we cannot disregard the fact that the attacks perpetrated by the racist régime of South Africa, principally against the front-line States, are in most cases directed against economic or infrastructure facilities with a view to aggravating further the situation and attempting to subdue those countries by force and prevent them from exercising their sovereign decision to adopt a truly independent course.

We welcome with satisfaction the action which numerous countries and United Nations bodies and other international organizations have taken and continue to take to alleviate the critical economic situation experienced by the African countries today. We believe that it is an elementary matter of solidarity, a duty

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

to contribute to saving the lives of thousands of human beings. But we must warn against any idea which tends to conceive of that assistance as being purely for the purpose of solidarity with the African countries. In reality, our commitment to Africa is not and cannot be limited to providing emergency palliatives that do not decisively contribute to creating conditions that will enable the African continent to aspire to future development. To fail to see this would be to plunge those countries into a state of perpetual underdevelopment and deep poverty so that they would continue to subsist only thanks to international assistance.

For this reason, our efforts must also be aimed at contributing to the struggle against the effects of climatic conditions, creating structures and infrastructures and supplying the technical and technological know-how which are so necessary to the African peoples to ensure true independent development. But the main thing, without which all of the foregoing cannot achieve its full effect, is to create a new external climate which, through the real implementation of the new international economic order, can bring about the rule of justice and equity in international economic relations and foster the emergence of disinterested international co-operation aimed at bringing about true progress for the peoples.

We welcome the decision of the Group of 77 to endorse a draft resolution which, inter alia, decides to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the critical economic situation in Africa. We trust that on that occasion measures will be adopted that will promote the long-term development of Africa in accordance with the very legitimate aspirations of the peoples and countries of that continent, as expressed in the various declarations and programmes of action adopted by the Organization of African Unity and by the Economic Commission for Africa. For our part, we can guarantee that Cuba's participation, as always, will be positive and supportive.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

Finally, we wish to recognize the work done by the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund, among other bodies, that have contributed to this international crusade to alleviate the critical situation of the African continent. We believe that these activities should be maintained and efforts redoubled.

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

The full participation of the international community, mainly of those industrialized countries which possess the necessary financial and material resources to take part, must be ensured in the drive to resolve the critical economic situation in Africa. But such participation must take the form not only of sending assistance to the African countries affected but also through the emergence and growth of a firm political will conducive to a true restructuring of the world economy and the creation of a political and security climate that will facilitate the allocation of massive resources to save and develop a whole continent. Let us halt the arms race, let us set aside the dream of "star wars" and let us dedicate the resources thus released to promoting a better life in the developing countries, and especially in the African countries, so that they may, like all of us, enjoy a better life.

Mr. TURKMEN (Turkey): For the last year or two, the crisis in Africa has become a major concern for the international community. It has dominated public opinion in almost every country. It is encouraging to see that the response to this emergency by the United Nations system and Member Governments has been very promising. The Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, which was created by the Secretary-General last year, provided a sound basis for concerted international action. This Office and other United Nations bodies played a remarkable role in dealing with the emergency in many African regions. At a time when the spirit of international co-operation between the developed and developing countries needs strengthening, the active support given by United Nations bodies and Member Governments to the crisis in Africa has set a good example of international solidarity.

I also wish to express here our deep appreciation of the concerted efforts of African Governments within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

as well as of the valuable activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), as they helped us to identify correctly the emergency and medium-term and long-term needs of Africa's economic development.

Today, African countries on the whole are facing a grave and deeply rooted problem in various sectors of their economies. It is obvious that there are internal and external factors contributing to this situation. First of all, I should like to underline briefly some of the internal factors which seem very important to my country, itself a developing country which has undergone painful experiences in the past.

The most important aspect is that the food situation in Africa has been deteriorating for the last two decades. The growth in population, on the other hand, has been greater than food production. Considering the severe drought prevailing since 1967, the prospects for the future in the food sector are still gloomy, despite the emergency aid reaching various parts of the continent. It is disquieting to read in the report of the Secretary-General that in more than half of the African countries, per capita grain production is well below 140 kilograms, which corresponds to a minimum for a healthy diet. It is also disconcerting to read that each year about 70,000 square kilometres of useful agricultural land are turning into desert around the Sahara region. In the present situation, characterized by hunger and despair, the international community should heed the call for further increases in its efforts to overcome the food crisis. The situation also requires international action to meet the needs in the agricultural field, such as fertilizers, improved seeds, capital equipment and irrigation.

Besides agriculture, the industrialization process in Africa has also been encountering serious problems. The much desired structural changes in the African countries have been stagnating. There is an increasing gap between savings and

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

investments. In the low-income African countries, savings declined from 16 per cent in 1970 to 6 per cent of the gross domestic product in 1981. The ratio of manufacturing exports to the total exports of the African countries is lower today than in 1970. We believe that the time has come for the international community to tackle the prevailing bottlenecks in African industrialization, such as the lack of investment resources, inadequate foreign exchange and the sombre external market conditions for manufactured goods. These problems require the close attention of the international community.

The African countries are experiencing serious difficulties in the foreign trade area. The export performances of other developing countries on the whole have been better than those of African countries. The gap between the import requirements of African economies, such as capital goods and intermediate products to sustain their development process and their export earnings to pay for them, has been growing. According to publications of the Food and Agriculture Organization, African exports declined about 20 per cent in value from 1981 to 1983. This widening gap has been discouraging various African countries and hampering new initiatives for various development projects. The African countries' declining terms of trade have also constituted a negative factor. During the last 15 years, the deterioration in terms of trade in low-income African countries was over 13 per cent. The depressed prices of raw materials, as well as the widespread protectionist practices particularly in developed nations, have further curtailed future prospects in the trade field in African countries. At this stage, we believe that there is an imperative need for the international community to consider some important changes in the mechanisms of international trade to create a more favourable environment for African exports.

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

For the African countries, external debt constitutes another area of major concern. According to the recent statement by Mr. Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the total external debt of African countries reached \$158 billion in 1984 and is expected to reach \$170 billion by the end of this year. On the other hand, according to Mr. Saouma, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, these debts represent over 40 per cent of their gross domestic product. Over 30 per cent of their export earnings go to service this debt. Thus, the African countries are carrying a much heavier debt burden in relation to gross domestic product and export levels than other developing countries.

There is no doubt that the emergency relief operations carried out by the international community have been very useful in alleviating the suffering in Africa. However, it is obvious that this emergency is not a cure for deep-rooted development problems in Africa. In this context, priority should be given gradually to the development needs of the African peoples. Strenuous efforts must continue to mobilize resources and co-ordinate multilateral assistance for African countries so as to enable them to move from an emergency situation to long-term recovery.

The present situation and the gloomy prospects for Africa require further joint action by the African countries and the international community to secure a better future. To this end, the basic principles of the Lagos Plan of Action adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU could establish a useful basis, as this Plan calls for reduced population growth, increasing agricultural production, industrialization based on domestic raw materials, the adoption of more realistic exchange rates and the widening of education.

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize Turkey's full support for the international initiatives to overcome the present crisis in Africa. Last year we joined with great sympathy in the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. As a developing country, Turkey is doing its utmost within its limited resources to contribute to the programmes related to Africa. To this end, Turkey pledged a contribution of \$10 million during the Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa this year. Accordingly we have been taking the necessary steps to channel this aid to the countries affected by famine.

My country supports the convening of a special session of the General Assembly next year, as requested by the African Heads of State and Government, on the critical economic situation in Africa. We hope that that special session of the General Assembly will produce concrete results and lead to a new momentum for adequate policies.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): May I first congratulate very sincerely the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on their national day, the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

The difficult economic situation of a large number of developing countries in Africa is still at the centre of attention in the United Nations, and there is a good reason for that. Despite efforts to relieve the critical situation in those countries, the per capita gross national product continues to fall, agricultural production and the production of food products and consumer goods are increasingly limited, their trade is seriously disorganized, their external debt is increasing. All those factors, in addition to particularly unfavourable climatic conditions in some regions, have added to the acuteness of the problems of famine, disease and poverty for millions of Africans.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

In recent economic forums in the United Nations my country, together with the international community as a whole, has expressed concern about the severe trials that have beset the peoples of Africa. We would not wish to let this opportunity go by to reaffirm our support for all initiatives which seek to provide selfless assistance to the African peoples. We also support the initiative to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the critical situation in Africa. This aid is absolutely necessary and vital if we wish to relieve the plight of millions of human beings.

However considerable this assistance, it will unfortunately not be enough to solve the basic problems of the African countries. The natural disasters that have struck Africa in recent years do not seem to us to be the true cause of the worsening of those problems. Is it not a paradox, as was made clear in the Declaration on the Critical Situation in Africa, that Africa, despite its enormous natural riches, remains the least-developed from the economic standpoint?

The roots of the serious economic crisis that afflicts the African countries lie, as is clear from the Secretary-General's report, in their past as colonized countries. Merciless colonial exploitation is the basis of the backward economic structure of the continent and explains the limited capacity of those countries to confront their economic problems alone. That fact is also brought out in the Lagos Plan of Action, where it is said that over the last 20 years Africa has been the victim of direct exploitation by neocolonialist forces, which seek to influence to their own advantage the policies, economy and development of the African countries.

Drought and other natural disasters have only highlighted the weakness of the African economies and their vulnerability in the light of the deteriorating international situation and the destabilization of the system of international economic relations which followed. We agree with those African countries which

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

believe that drought and famine cannot be overcome by emergency measures alone, expressed in stop-gap deliveries from outside. Certainly that assistance can relieve the situation but it will equally certainly not lead to an overall solution of the problems, which must be sought in releasing the African economies from their colonial heritage and the restructuring of international economic relations on a just democratic basis, guaranteeing to the African and other developing countries conditions of equality in the world economy.

This necessary restructuring cannot be brought about by unilateral, temporary measures, by attempts to impose market economy development models, trying to prove the advantages of those models by making much of relief operations at the cost of political concessions to Western monopolies and of rejecting the just demands for equal partnership. All such attempts thwart the efforts of the African countries to escape from their critical situation and they seek to perpetuate economic inequality as well as the political dependence of those countries.

Accordingly we share the views expressed in the concluding part of the second memorandum of the Economic Commission for Africa, appealing for measures to eliminate the continuing nature of the crisis in the African economies and stressing that the cause of that crisis lies in the international economic situation, which is based on the economic policies of imperialism.

Many United Nations documents quite rightly state that the deteriorating conditions of international economic co-operation continue to have a negative impact on the economies of the developing countries, particularly the African countries. There, protectionist policies have a particularly negative effect, in imposing various sanctions, enforcing coercive economic measures, and attempting to take advantage of the economic difficulties of the developing countries and imposing political concessions on them.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

Like the other socialist countries, my country resolutely and constantly supports effective measures to eliminate exploitation and inequality in international economic relations, to abolish discriminatory measures and unequal trade, to establish an economically balanced and acceptable relationship between the prices for commodities and industrial manufactured goods, to control the activities of the transnational corporations, to provide and use loans on normal terms - in a word, to democratize economic relations as a whole.

That position was clearly reaffirmed in the Declaration of the Sofia Meeting held in October last by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, which rejects any form of exploitation, any attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of others and the use of economic relations as a means of exerting political pressure to establish a new international economic order. Putting an end to the constant outflow of resources of the developing countries, particularly African countries, in the form of profits of the transnational corporations is the main problem to be tackled. Even the most sketchy data show that the annual losses of the African countries following the activities of the transnational corporations amounts to more than \$6 billion.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

Enormous resources could be released and used for development if the mad arms race instigated by those in aggressive Western circles were ended.

My country pursues a constant policy of co-operation and the expansion of economic relations with African and other developing countries on the basis of strict respect for the principles of equality, mutual advantage and non-interference in internal affairs. Specific information on my country's co-operation with African countries and the assistance we give them was contained in the statements made by my delegation at recent sessions of the Economic and Social Council, at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly and at the International Conference on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa.

I would recall that Bulgaria's economic, scientific and technical co-operation with African countries is planned on a long-term basis, reflecting their real needs and helping them to procure an economic infrastructure that can guarantee them balanced independent development. As far as we are able, and in accordance with the 60 agreements on economic, scientific and technical co-operation in force with various African countries, Bulgaria is helping them to carry out and put into operation various industrial, agro-industrial, agricultural and hydro-technical projects.

Bulgaria has given considerable assistance in the training of Africans. In 1983-84 3,345 African students received diplomas or took courses in colleges in my country. That assistance is geared to the specific needs of African countries and their long-term prospects of economic development.

My country has taken a series of measures to stimulate trade with the developing countries, including African countries, inter alia by introducing preferential treatment for the products those countries import. This system of preferences also includes a reduction of 50 per cent in or total exemption from the

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

import taxes on some articles imported into Bulgaria from those countries. The trade between Bulgaria and African countries has been dynamically developed and in 1984 amounted to \$1.1 million. Machines and food products predominate in this trade.

Bulgaria was one of the first countries of the world to respond to the appeal for assistance to African countries beset by natural disasters. To help remedy the catastrophic situation in Ethiopia, at the end of 1984 Bulgaria gave the Government of that country assistance amounting to 12 million leva.

In order to try to meet the most urgent needs of the African countries in the form of food, pharmaceuticals and clothing, Bulgaria had provided by the end of 1984 provided assistance totalling 16.5 million leva. That does not include assistance co-ordinated and supplied by Bulgarian organizations such as the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa and Asia, youth organizations and so on.

Far be it from us to assume that Bulgarian assistance to the developing countries of Africa can be decisive in helping to resolve their complex problems. This is the assistance of a small country that has its own development problems to face. But it is assistance given by a people that respects and supports the determination of the African peoples to ensure economic development in conditions of equality and independence and their hopes for a better future.

Mr. RESHETNYAK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): First I should like to take this opportunity to thank the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria for their congratulations on the celebration of the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Great October Revolution, which is now being celebrated by the Soviet Union.

The year that has elapsed since the adoption by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session of the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in

(Mr. Reshetnyak, Ukrainian SSR)

Africa has not, unfortunately, brought about any meaningful changes for the better in the dire critical economic situation of the countries and peoples of Africa.

As is clear from the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the serious economic and social crisis besetting Africa is continuing, and that has aroused the serious concern of the international community, which we fully share. Drought and other natural disasters have exacerbated the crisis in Africa, particularly the food situation, but at the same time they have revealed as never before Africa's social and economic problems.

In the joint statement made at the last session of the General Assembly the delegations of the socialist countries noted that the present economic and social crisis in Africa is rooted in the colonial past and is the result of the neo-colonialist policies of the imperialist Powers. We are referring not merely to the historical responsibility for the effects of the colonial exploitation of the human and natural resources of Africa in the past but also to the continuous neo-colonialist plunder of the present time.

According to certain data, the exploitation of African countries by transnational corporations between 1970 and 1982 amounted to \$33 billion. The high level of debt servicing and the reduction in commodity export earnings have led to the outflow of financial resources from African countries. Not only has the backwardness in development characteristic of Africa not been reduced; it has been made worse.

The food problem is the most acute, although Africa has sufficient resources to increase many times over the volume of its food production. However, the desire of the imperialist forces to keep Africa as a commodity reservoir and a market for manufactured goods is one of the factors that has delayed solution of this problem.

(Mr. Reshetnyak, Ukrainian SSR)

We share the view expressed in the Declaration of the twenty-first session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity regarding the continuing deteriorating economic situation in Africa and the reasons for it - the deep economic crisis and the present system of unjust and unequal economic relations.

Drought and famine cannot be overcome by mere emergency measures, however necessary they may be in the dire situation. As has been stated by the Economic Commission for Africa, we need to focus efforts on the long-term aspects of the economic problems of Africa, the root causes of which go beyond the confines of Africa and are connected with the unfavourable economic situation outside the young liberated States.

Regarding the various ways and means of solving the present problems of Africa, we should like to stress in particular the need for consistent progress towards social and economic changes, the mobilization of internal resources, the strengthening of the public and co-operative sectors of the economy, assurance of the sovereignty of States over their own natural resources, industrial development, the training of nationals, limitation of the activities of foreign private capital, particularly the transnational corporations, and the introduction of national planning with the balanced use of all sources of development.

As regards a radical solution of the food problem, we are of the view that the economy inherited from the colonial past must be restructured. It is necessary to develop national food programmes and combine measures for social and technical rehabilitation with progressive forms of land development and use, and on that basis gradually to move agriculture in African countries out of the present deadlock and create a firm basis for subsequent development. This would be a completely realistic way of providing a solution to the food problem in Africa.

(Mr. Reshetnyak, Ukrainian SSR)

We cannot ignore the negative consequences of the aggressive, destabilizing policies of South Africa for the economies of the States of the southern part of the African continent.

The complex and difficult problem of ending the crisis in Africa should also be seen in the context of the general struggle of progressive forces for peace, international security and disarmament, the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and equitable basis and the strengthening of the unity and solidarity of the peoples and countries of Africa on a broad, anti-neo-colonial basis.

Mr. MUÑIZ (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The Argentine delegation wishes to add its voice to those of previous speakers who have expressed their thanks to the Secretary-General once again for his efforts to mobilize the international community to deal with the critical economic situation faced by the African nations.

The representatives of those nations set forth in detail the stark truth about that continent and in their statements to this Assembly reported on the efforts of their countries to find a solution to their problems.

As developing countries we see in the African continent the harshest version of the problems that plague us all: the deterioration of the terms of trade, growing protectionism in the developed countries, the decline in the world prices of raw materials, and the disproportionate burden of the external debt, compounded by high interest rates.

The structural problems that exist in international economic relations call for a joint effort by the international community to achieve a new order if we wish to find definitive solutions to the problems besetting us.

The Secretary-General's report reviews a series of factors which combine to block any possibility of ensuring the well-being of the peoples suffering from the food emergency and providing a minimum basis for the rehabilitation and development of the most vulnerable African countries.

Thus, the external causes include the fall in African exports, as a result of lower international demand and the effects of protectionism. As with other developing countries, the African economies reveal a chronic imbalance in their balance of payments owing to the external trade deficit, aggravated by the deterioration in the terms of trade and the consequent increase in the external debt. Consequently the African countries, like many other countries in Asia and

(Mr. Mufiz, Argentina)

Latin America, despite their poverty are exporting vast amounts of capital which therefore cannot be used to meet the basic needs of their peoples and to finance their efforts to set their own development going again..

Recently the international community, through the specialized agencies of the United Nations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), was warned about the emergency situation in Africa through clear analyses of the problem and far-reaching publicity campaigns.

There has been a very favourable response. We can only welcome the response that has been forthcoming from donor Governments, and the work done by the United Nations system to co-ordinate this aid since 1983. This international mobilization has been increasing, and is still being encouraged by the publication of such documents as the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, the plan of action of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in April 1985, resolutions of the Council of FAO and other documents of great importance.

As part of this movement my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's decision to establish the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa as a means of ensuring the co-ordination and regional use of the resources allocated to United Nations programmes and organizations.

It should be emphasized that the priorities in terms of the type of requests, whether for food aid, technical assistance or financing of projects, should be determined by the countries concerned themselves in terms of their own strategies and national programmes.

Consequently we gave our support to the Lagos Plan and the Harare Declaration, documents in which the African Governments themselves set their own goals and

(Mr. Mufiz, Argentina)

defined the means of reaching them, and we take note of the Declaration of Addis Ababa adopted recently. On these lines my country has directed all its work under the headings of co-operation among developing countries and technical co-operation among developing countries towards the achievement of food self-sufficiency and training in the area of the use and production of agricultural inputs.

Argentina, like other developing countries, is also feeling the harmful effects of current international economic trends. Nevertheless, we have been contributing, modestly but effectively, to efforts to meet the emergent needs of the crisis in Africa. Thus we have been continuing to supply food and also to provide technical co-operation to countries which need it to improve and increase their production and processing of foods. In the latter area food co-operation undertakings include the teaching and introduction of appropriate technology, and the instruction and training of staff, and so forth.

To give effect to these ideas we have pledged a substantial contribution in the form of Argentine wheat to be used for various programmes of rural development and improvement of agricultural production that the World Food Programme is conducting in developing countries. As part of this effort we are now transferring a donation of 15,000 tonnes of wheat which will be distributed to African countries through this programme.

At the same time, without losing sight of the need to integrate emergency aid with medium-term and long-term assistance, Argentina has identified areas of co-operation in various projects at both the bilateral and multilateral levels directed to laying down the proper bases for development and rehabilitation.

In this context, Argentina recently joined the African Development Bank, and for some years has participated in the African Development Fund. Similarly, we have

(Mr. Mufiz, Argentina)

established a system of credits for African countries, and has signed bilateral economic and financial agreements with no less than 15 countries of the region. With regard to scientific and technical co-operation, the Argentine Government is exchanging missions dealing with the study and preparation of agricultural projects, administrative reforms, fisheries, vocational training, and maritime transport infrastructure.

Lastly, Argentina has been providing, and will continue to provide, its fullest support to all political initiatives both in the United Nations and in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries designed to foster the recovery and rehabilitation of Africa.

Unfortunately there can be no immediate solution to the crisis now gripping a large part of the African continent, but there are some encouraging signs. The international community has become fully aware of the problem; it has a better grasp of the magnitude and scope of the situation, and it has responded promptly.

(Mr. Muñiz, Argentina)

However, economic co-operation among developing countries has limits that are the result of the difficulties that those very countries are facing.

The solution to the present crisis in Africa can be reached only through a further increase in co-operation and assistance on the part of the entire international community. In renewing our commitment jointly to overcome the critical situation in Africa, we should perhaps at the same time express our political will to correct those injustices to avoid similar emergencies in the future, be they in Africa or in any other part of the world.

Mr. MARDOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me at the outset to express our sincere thanks to those delegations that have congratulated us on the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution being celebrated today by the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including the Byelorussian SSR, and by all progressive mankind.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR shares the concern of the international community at the critical situation that has arisen in Africa. The Byelorussian SSR has always advocated and will continue to advocate the intensification of co-operation and the co-ordination of efforts with a view to resolving that problem.

The critical situation in that part of the world is connected, as is borne out by the statements made by many delegations here, with the unfavourable natural and climatic conditions that have come about in recent years.

We cannot, however, ignore the fact that the situation as we see it today in Africa is primarily the result of the weak economic potential of the majority of African States, the historical roots of which go back to the continent's colonial past. This is the result of the maintenance of neo-colonialism and of the continuing economic exploitation of the natural and human resources of those States by the former colonial Powers.

(Mr. Mardovich, Byelorussian SSR)

We are thus of the view that the measures being taken to assist Africa only partially alleviate the problem. A constructive and long-term solution to the crisis in Africa can be found only by eliminating the unequal and unfair economic relations that have been created in the world economy. Obvious examples of such injustices are the enormous foreign debt of the African countries, the establishment by the developed capitalist countries of protectionist barriers against exports of the manufactured goods of developing countries, the policy of economic pressure, and so on.

Enormous damage is done to the economies of the African States by the activities of the transnational corporations, which are particularly active in southern Africa. As was brought out during the course of the recent United Nations hearings on the activities of transnational corporations in southern Africa, they constitute a substantial obstacle to the eradication of the relations of colonial dependence within the continent, contribute to the consolidation of the unequal position of the developing countries in the system of international economic relations and support the apartheid régime in South Africa, which forces developing countries to spend the scant material resources they need to overcome their social and economic backwardness on strengthening their defence capabilities.

The African countries require not only short-term, one-off measures, but also fundamental, progressive socio-economic transformations that would remove the causes of the continuing economic crisis. Such transformations would include the strengthening of the public sector in their economies, proper methods of economic planning, land reform and the active involvement in the development process of all segments of the population, including women and young people.

My delegation fully shares the view expressed in preceding statements that a sound basis for a long-term solution to the problems of economic development in Africa can be the creation of a stable economic basis for the development of modern industry and agriculture and the training of nationals. For its part, my country

(Mr. Mardovich, Byelorussian SSR)

has always shown and will continue to show understanding of what the African countries need to solve these problems. Many types of industrial equipment, agricultural, transport and road-building machinery, as well as other manufactured goods produced in the Byelorussian SSR are sent to African countries through All-Union trade organizations. Our country devotes considerable attention to the training of experts for the developing African countries. Higher educational establishments and specialized secondary schools in the Byelorussian SSR are now training more than 5,500 students from 99 countries throughout the world, and a considerable proportion are from the African countries. They are afforded all the conditions necessary successfully to acquire professions needed in their countries. They have at their disposal the best learning environment and a highly qualified teaching staff.

At the same time, many specialists and experts from the Byelorussian SSR are working in African countries, passing on their experience and know how, inter alia by the on-site training of nationals.

Together with this, we fully share the view that, in order to overcome socio-economic backwardness in Africa, we need to step up the efforts of the international community to establish favourable external economic conditions for the accelerated development of the continent, and we need to ensure the consistent implementation of such basic United Nations instruments as the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Declaration and Programme of Action for the Establishment of the New International Economic Order and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. We believe that the success of the efforts made by the international community to remedy the critical situation in Africa depends to great extent on the commitment of States to the principles of economic co-operation enshrined in those instruments.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly will resume consideration of this item and take a decision on the draft resolution at a subsequent meeting to be announced in the Journal.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.