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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 27 May 1986, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. DE PINIES	(Spain)
later:	Mr. GUISSOU (Vice-President)	(Burkina Faso)
later:	Mr. AGIUS (Vice-President)	(Malta)

- Organization of work
- Consideration of the critical economic situation in Africa to focus, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, on the rehabilitation and medium-term and long-term development problems and challenges facing African countries with a view to promoting and adopting action-oriented and concerted measures [6] (continued)

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

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This afternoon the Assembly will first proceed to the election of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Thirteenth Special Session, who will also be a member of the General Committee.

Following consultations, it is my understanding that there is general agreement that Mr. Stephen Lewis of Canada should serve as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Thirteenth Special Session. I take it, therefore, that it is the wish of the Assembly to elect him by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I congratulate Mr. Lewis on behalf of the General Assembly and on my own behalf.

The General Committee for the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted.

AGENDA ITEM 6 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF THE CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFRICA TO FOCUS, IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED MANNER, ON THE REHABILITATION AND MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING AND ADOPTING ACTION-ORIENTED AND CONCERTED MEASURES

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I would draw the attention of members to two decisions taken by the Assembly at its 1st plenary meeting, upon the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee: First, owing to the very large number of speakers desiring to participate in the debate in a very limited amount of time, statements should not exceed 15 minutes. Secondly, the normal requirement for a quorum to open a plenary meeting is waived for the duration of the debate at this special session.

The Assembly will now continue its consideration of item 6.

Mr. AKINYEMI (Nigeria): On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the presidency of this special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the critical economic situation in Africa. As the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, President Abdou Diouf, said with so much dignity and eloquence this morning, Africa - and indeed the whole world - expects much in terms of concrete results from this session. I wish to echo his every word.

General Assembly resolution 40/40 enjoins us to focus our debate on the challenges facing African countries, with a view to promoting and adopting action-oriented and concerted measures. In that regard, I shall focus attention extensively, though not exclusively, on the issue of the development of food and agriculture, the area in which I have been mandated to speak for Africa.

Permit me first of all to place on record Africa's appreciation of "Live Aid", "Sports Aid" and such activities. To watch these people, old and young, engaged in these selfless and soul-inspiring activities is to feel good about being part of the human race. Bob Geldorf and the people he has motivated all over the world represent the acceptable face of humanity. Their activities are not necessarily condemnatory of us as Governments. However, they serve to remind us that humanity is not selfish, brutish and non-caring. Let "Sports Aid" remind all of us representatives of Governments of our capacity to do good and reach out to others if the will is there.

I should also like to express Africa's gratitude to the international community, including the Governments of individual countries, the United Nations system and voluntary organizations and agencies, for the generous assistance to the relief efforts during the recent drought and famine which affected many of our countries.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

We in Africa wish to stress the fact that to establish a prosperous future for our region there is need for our Governments, in concert with the international community, to focus in the short and medium term on specific priorities that will pave the way for the national and collective self-reliant and self-sustained growth and development of our economies. I wish, therefore, to reiterate Africa's determination to face and overcome the twin challenges of survival and development through the implementation of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-first ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 July 1985.

The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery addresses itself mainly to achieving a breakthrough in structural transformation and higher productivity. It also recognizes that the reactivation of African agriculture will not take place unless structural linkages are established between agriculture and industry.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

This will require the provision of agricultural implements, fertilizers and pesticides, as well as the processing of food and other agricultural products. Indispensable also will be economic infrastructures, particularly feeder and access roads, storage, marketing and distribution, and facilities for research in agricultural technologies.

Food and agriculture are, therefore, the centre of concern, and they have been designated the priority of priorities. No doubt, all other sectors are important in so far as they support and facilitate the structural transformation of the agricultural sector, and in so far as they assist in combating desertification and in developing human resources.

A major concern to Africa has been the long-term deteriorating trend in agricultural production and per capita food production. Some major factors responsible for that disappointing performance include, inter alia, over-dependence on rain-fed agriculture, inadequate investment, poor incentives to farmers, inadequate application of science and technology, inefficient marketing and distribution systems and institutionalized constraints. Other major factors that are mainly exogenous include, inter alia, the international recession, collapse in commodity prices, adverse terms of trade, decline in real terms in official development assistance, increased protectionism, high interest rates, currency fluctuations, and the heavy burden of debt and debt-servicing obligations of African countries. While it is true that Africa is not the only region affected by extraneous trends, the continent does not have the capacity other regions have to cushion the impact of those external shocks owing to the structural rigidities and the excessive outward orientation and dependence of the African economies.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

During 1971-1980, agricultural production grew by a mere average of 1.6 per cent per annum. This compares unfavourably with a rate of growth of 3 per cent for the developing countries as a whole. The deterioration is more noticeable in food production. At a time when Africa's population was growing at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent during the 1970s, total food production in the region as a whole was increasing by no more than 1.5 per cent. The result was that food self-sufficiency ratios dropped from 98 per cent in the 1960s to 86 per cent in 1980. In the period 1980-1984, food self-sufficiency ratios declined even further, as food production increased by a mere 1 per cent while population grew at a rate of 3 per cent. The cumulative result is that today about one out of five Africans depends for his or her survival on food imports.

It is obvious, therefore, that the widespread low level of productivity of the African economies is the fundamental cause of their continued underdevelopment and persistent economic crisis. Thus, a substantial increase in the level of productivity in all sectors, especially in agriculture, is a sine qua non for putting the African economies on the road to development. Side-by-side should be structural economic transformation, without which many African countries will not be able to attain the stage of self-reliant and self-sustained development with the implied flexibilities that will enable them to take their place as effective partners in the international system.

We in Africa are fully aware that the task of structural transformation will require, on our part, a radical change in development priority. Nowhere has this realization been more clearly demonstrated than in my own country, Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria has consequently embarked upon major changes in the orientation of development priorities, to lessen the dependence on the mono-culture of oil exports and the attendant serious economic and social problems.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

The Nigerian Government, like most other African Governments, and in consonance with Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, has embarked on a medium-term self-reliant structural adjustment programme in order to deal with structural distortions, low productivity and a high level of unemployment in the economy. Agriculture is the main priority. Within that priority, focus is sharply placed on the productive capacity and improvement of the quality of life of the rural community and small-scale farmers who produce over 90 per cent of Nigeria's output of food and fibre and constitute the overwhelming majority of the population.

On the side of African countries, individually and collectively, there is an unshakeable resolve to mobilize their internal resources and capabilities for the accomplishment of all those measures that are outlined in the Priority Programme, to ensure the rapid recovery of the African economies and a substantial improvement in the well-being of our peoples. This special session of the General Assembly should, therefore, address the vital issue of external resource-flows for Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery.

The World Bank, which has made a study of the economic crisis facing Africa, states that Africa needs up to \$US 35.3 billion a year over the next five years for the continent to be able to effect a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 3-4 per cent a year by 1990. There is a growing consensus that Africa needs economic growth to raise the productivity of the existing capital stock and new investment to increase the share of investment as a proportion of GDP, create new job opportunities, increase consumption and enhance its capacity to service debts. African economies will not respond to structural adjustment if they are stripped to the bone, without the injection of additional resources, and without policies which stimulate growth, investment and sustained development.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

In terms of external resource flows for African economic recovery, this special session of the General Assembly has a duty to call for higher targets of official development assistance for Africa. Official development assistance for Africa declined by about 9 per cent from 1980 to 1984. My delegation is aware that a few countries have of their own free will set higher aid targets. The official development assistance/gross national product ratios for some countries have already exceeded the international target of 0.7 per cent of GDP. In making this appeal for higher aid targets, I am conscious of the fact that a number of donor countries have announced their commitment to increase their aid targets. However, I should like to urge the special session of the General Assembly to uphold the principle that no donor country should be a net recipient of resource-flows from any African country, in order to ensure that Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery is not starved of resources.

Several African countries have already begun to restructure their economies within the framework of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. That commitment to structural adjustment should induce commercial banks to step up lending to productive and export-oriented sectors of African economies. In addition, commercial banks should take full advantage of the increased role given to the private sector in African economies to stimulate growth and increase consumption. Africa's investment rate fell by 14 per cent in 1984. The current level of investment in Africa is less than what is required for sustained development. African countries would like to urge commercial banks to exhibit a greater willingness to participate in the longer-term development of the African continent by seeking, among other things, non-project lending on concessionary terms to enable African countries import raw materials, spare parts and equipment

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

in order to rehabilitate industries and increase the capacities of their under-utilized factories. African economies are not strong enough to bear the burden of short- to medium-term credits. The burden of servicing those debts and the attendant effects are known to have thrown African economies deeper into crisis.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

My delegation wishes to stress the central role that multilateral institutions can play in economic recovery in Africa. The World Bank and other multilateral institutions have an important role to play in promoting adjustment lending to African countries. The industrial nations have to take urgent political decisions to increase the resources of these multilateral institutions to enable them to respond much more to the development needs of African countries. Resource scarcity is posing one of the greatest threats to the success of the adjustment lending programmes of these multilateral institutions. In most African States, total investment has been on the decline as increased debt-servicing payments and reduced external inflows are accompanied by cuts in both public and private investment. But severe budgetary cuts curtail investment and growth on which the credit worthiness of African economies depend. The dilemma of the African situation points to the urgent need to take the political decisions necessary to increase the resources of the multilateral institutions that are willing and eager to respond to the economic crisis in Africa.

Debt relief constitutes an important element in the flow of resources. World Bank statistics show that, in respect of 10 highly indebted developing nations, total debt-service absorbs one third of domestic savings and almost 8 per cent of the GDP. Interest payments alone amount to 4.5 per cent of the GDP. For African countries, debt service is calculated at about \$24.5 billion a year between 1986 and 1990. This will exceed by far the most optimistic expectation of resource flows to complement internationally generated resources for the implementation of the Priority Programme. It should be recalled that the resource gap expected is put at \$9.1 billion annually in the African document. Therefore, unless this special session takes account of the issue of debt relief within the context of resource flows for Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, I maintain that African economic recovery will not be a reality as long as African countries

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

are expected to meet their debt obligations at the current level. The international community has the responsibility to take political decisions that will result in appropriate debt relief. My delegation appeals to creditor nations and credit institutions to agree to multi-year reschedulings with African countries. Repeated reschedulings create a climate of uncertainty that makes sustained development difficult to achieve. Foreign suppliers exploit such uncertainty by increasing the price of their products. Frequent reschedulings lead to further accumulation of arrears, which in themselves halt new loan commitments.

Africa has sought within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade unrestricted free access to the markets of its major trading partners for tropical products. That hope has not been attained. Africa's exports continue to be buffeted by increasing protectionism, low prices and instability in the exchange rates of the world's major trading currencies. This special session should urge Africa's trading partners to roll back protectionist measures, refrain from introducing new restrictions and improve access to exports of African countries as part of the effort by the international community to increase resource flows to Africa. Africa's share of world trade is currently very low. African States should be enabled to expand their trade with the rest of the world so as to lay a sound foundation for growth without aid.

I wish to affirm anew the determination and commitment of Africa, its peoples and Governments to the creation of a new economic environment in the region that will enable it to function more effectively in the international trading and economic system. In turn, Nigeria calls on all States Members of the United Nations and urges this special session to lay the political framework that will encourage and enable the whole international community to mobilize the necessary resources for assisting the process of the rehabilitation and restoration of Africa's economy. We consider this the real challenge of interdependence. It is

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

an endeavour that will be found rewarding for all, since what helps Africa must also contribute to a durable global prosperity.

Let us therefore work for such a world in which we will not only be unified in words but also united in action.

Mr. VAYRYNEN (Finland): Echoing my remarks from this rostrum last September, I wish to begin my statement by saying how delighted I am at seeing you, Sir, presiding over our deliberations. As always you can count on the full co-operation of my delegation.

I also want to thank the Preparatory Committee and its Chairman, Mr. Edgard Pisani, as well as the Secretariat, for the thorough preparations for this special session.

My delegation wishes also to pay tribute to His Excellency the President of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity on his statement, which bore impressive evidence of the resolve of the African nations to overcome the present crisis in their continent.

Despite the gradual alleviation of the widespread famine, the economic problems of Africa remain a major challenge to the countries of Africa and to the international community alike. This special session of the General Assembly offers a unique opportunity to establish a political foundation for concerted action for economic recovery of the African continent, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

External and internal causes of the critical economic situation in Africa have been thoroughly discussed over the past few years at international forums and the roots of that situation have been acknowledged to be multiple. At the time of independence, many African countries were ill-prepared to undertake the task of economic transformation and growth. At the same time, expectations for economic and social advance were higher than ever.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

Internal constraints, like shortcomings in economic policies, lack of basic infrastructure, inadequate investment in agricultural development, coupled with the lack of proper incentives, especially for small farmers, have been aggravated by natural calamities like drought and desertification. Furthermore, external factors, such as the oil crisis in the 1970s, the international economic recession of the early 1980s, together with the decline in commodity prices, have led to a severe loss of export revenues for the already weak African economies. Adverse trends in terms of trade, high interest rates and the decline of official development assistance in real terms have contributed to the heavy debt burden of many African countries.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

In addition to economic misfortunes, Africa has been plagued by political instability, resulting in growing numbers of refugees. South Africa has intensified, as the latest grave developments demonstrate, its policy of aggression and economic destabilization against the countries in the southern region. The people of Namibia continue to suffer under the illegal occupation imposed by South Africa. All this, combined with internal instabilities and external hostilities, has taken a heavy toll of the scarce African resources and diverted them from priority economic purposes. International pressure on South Africa must be strengthened. The sovereignty of African States must be fully respected. Violence in the continent must be stopped.

We have been impressed by the determination of the African Governments themselves to review their domestic policies and to make necessary adjustments in their economies. Finland welcomes the adoption by the African Heads of State and Government of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which covers the remaining years of this decade. Finland fully agrees with the key orientation of the new policy directive aimed at intensified efforts at the national level. A new kind of recognition of the crucial role of sound macro-economic policies and higher priority for agriculture and rural rehabilitation is indeed necessary to pave the way to an ecologically sound and sustainable development process. The high priority of the rehabilitation, upgrading and maintenance of existing production facilities, together with the necessary human resources development, well illustrate this approach. Finland has also noted that in all these efforts the effective use of domestic resources, both human and material, is called for.

Finland supports the emphasis given in the priority programme to the participation in development of all citizens. The ultimate objective of all

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

development efforts is to increase the well-being of the whole population. On the other hand, without determined utilization of the human potential at all levels and in all sectors agreed targets cannot be reached. The well-known role of women, for example, in agriculture, must be better reflected in economic planning. More attention must also be given to women's needs in the fields of health, social services and education. African women need recognition of the important role they already have in African societies.

I should also like to emphasize the importance of population policies. The very high population growth rate in many countries makes it difficult, if not impossible, even to maintain present standards of living. The overall density of Africa's population is still low, but in certain areas it is increasing at an alarming rate. Migration from rural areas has already created serious urban problems. Finland therefore urges the African Governments to look at population issues with all the seriousness that they deserve and adopt effective policies suited to their own circumstances.

Finland acknowledges the fact that efforts to achieve these objectives and give effect to priorities need to be effectively supported by the international community. The extent to which the donor community is likely to increase aid to Africa will largely depend on the donor's perception of the determination of the African countries to pursue growth-oriented economic adjustment as outlined in the Priority Programme. Donors - and this applies to my own Government as well - need to be reassured that aid and the recipient countries' own resources are used effectively and that aid will not delay necessary policy changes or become a disincentive to them. It is imperative that the existing resources are managed in the best possible manner. In the view of Finland, which already now channels the bulk of its official development assistance to Africa, this is vital. Many of the

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

reforms outlined in the Programme are such that the African Governments have to embark upon them in any case, but it is evident that the successful implementation of such reforms requires that the donor community accept its responsibility to support financially the long-term efforts of African countries. My Government is fully prepared to take part in intensified and co-ordinated assistance for the benefit of Africa.

This special session of the General Assembly has been convened to focus the international community's attention on Africa's future needs. Our task here is to draw up a synthesis of the critical economic situation in Africa and to agree on joint action-oriented measures. Let me briefly summarize what the Government of Finland considers to be the main elements of concerted action.

First, there should be a commitment on the part of the African Governments that they will reorient their development programmes along the lines indicated in their Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. Secondly, the donor community must support the policies that are to be implemented at the country level. Thirdly, a follow-up mechanism is necessary to make possible joint review of the implementation of agreed programmes. And, fourthly, the specific commitments of the parties in question should be made using existing multilateral and bilateral channels. This special session should, however, indicate the general scope of future resource requirements.

Finland is confident that this special session can establish the necessary political foundation and mutual commitments. I believe also that such understandings will influence the ongoing negotiations to increase the resources of the international financing institutions, such as the eighth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), as well as discussions on rescheduling the loans of the African countries. The co-ordinated efforts of the United Nations

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

system in the field of emergency work in Africa have also given evidence that United Nations agencies are capable of adjusting their own programmes and working together in an efficient way. This example should be extended to the longer-term programmes as well. The leadership role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the field of co-ordination is important.

My Government is ready to support the proposal to review the situation and the implementation of the action programme in 1988 at the forty-third session of the General Assembly. The message from this session should be unambiguous: the African Governments and the international community have decided to break the vicious circle of economic crisis in Africa and have adopted an action-oriented programme for economic recovery.

Mr. YAÑEZ BARNUEVO (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all I wish to express my delegation's satisfaction at the holding of this special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

Spain at the General Assembly supported the idea of convening this session and welcomed the fact that the relevant resolution was adopted by consensus.

I also wish to highlight the important work done by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session under the able leadership of its Chairman, Mr. Pisani. In recent months intensive work has been done to try and arrive at positions of common agreement and converging interest among all participating countries.

The international economic crisis has hit the African continent especially hard, since to the general problems in other geographic areas we find in this continent additional structural factors and political instability. These basic factors have frequently been compounded by the implementation of development policies that later proved to be basically wrong. That is why we find it extremely useful that at this session we should analyse the situation so as to cast light on the major courses of action for the future.

My delegation will spare no effort in pursuing these goals. Since not much time is available, I shall avoid a detailed and exhaustive analysis. Nevertheless, I wish to refer to some of the basic aspects for the future of African economies: financial problems, commodities, access to markets, and the formulation of development policies.

With regard to financial problems in the African countries affected by the burden of the external debt, Spain, as it has already pointed out in other forums, cannot but echo the fact that responsibility is widely shared. As mentioned by the Head of Government of Spain in this same Hall during the last session of the General Assembly, it is important to recognize that the problem of the debt is not

(Mr. Yañez Barnuevo, Spain)

an isolated phenomenon but is, rather, an integral part of economic development in an interdependent world and, therefore, solving that problem is a task for all countries.

As far as the indebted countries are concerned, their inevitable contribution to solving the problem must be centred on the development of policies of economic reform and adjustment. These imply austerity programmes, but also the updating of resources and productive systems. However, it is also necessary that when these countries practise sound economic policies, they should be able to rely on effective international co-operation so that they may open up visions of hope for their peoples.

With reference to commodities, Spain has maintained a constructive position in the various international forums. We must nevertheless insist on the internal aspects of the problem. Thorough studies are required on the long-term prospects of certain commodities, as well as the adoption of policies that offer incentives for increasing productivity and diversification. Naturally, this does not mean that it is not necessary to continue making progress towards international solutions, especially those geared to favouring greater stabilization for export earnings.

With regard to access to markets, we consider it essential to have the active and constructive participation of African countries in the forthcoming negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. As far as Spain is concerned, our adherence to the European Economic Community will in the next few years, and depending on the rate of our own integration with the Community, entail a gradual opening of our market to African countries within the Community's scheme of the general system of preferences.

Finally, we attach the greatest importance to the attention that has been given in the African countries themselves, and in developed countries, to a

(Mr. Yañez Barnuevo, Spain)

revision of development policies within the framework of economic policies which have been strictly drawn up and implemented. Appropriate decisions in areas such as size of the public sector, exchange rate, pricing policy and a climate of security for direct investments seem to us to be necessary requirements - if not altogether sufficient - in order to approach the future with hope.

On the basis of this approach, a redefinition of sectoral priorities is of the utmost urgency. During the 1960s and 1970s, major errors of approach were made in which - we must be frank - developed and developing countries alike participated. The excessive priority given to sectors such as manufacturing, services and major infrastructure works, led the rates of investment in the primary sector, and basically in agriculture, to levels which were not commensurate with the importance of the active population employed in that sector, nor with the weight it had on the gross domestic product of the vast majority of the countries of the African continent. A land of development was sought that required a leap into the void, and the consequences have been tragic, especially in the area of food.

That is why we consider essential and wise the current analysis and trends towards growth centred on rural and agricultural development.

I also wish briefly to refer to what Spain has done in the area of co-operation in Africa. My country has taken part in the regional economic development machinery as a founding member of the African Development Fund and has contributed to all the replenishments of regular and special funds. We view our participation as a non-regional member in the African Development Bank with equal interest.

In the multilateral field Spain has since 1980 been a participant in the Agreement on Food Aid, and has also co-operated within the framework of the International Wheat Agreement and the International Emergency Food Reserve, as well as in the World Food Programme.

(Mr. Yañez Barnuevo, Spain)

I do not wish to add to this list, but I cannot fail to mention the contributions in money and in kind made by Spain to ease the lot of refugees in Africa within the framework of the First and Second International Conferences on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA I and ICARA II). My Government also supported the establishment of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, whose praiseworthy work of co-ordination has gone a long way towards alleviating the plight of some 20 African countries that have been severely affected by drought, desertification and hunger. Spain took part in the Conferences in Geneva and Rome and made financial contributions to some of their programmes.

(Mr. Yañez Barnuevo, Spain)

With regard to Spain's efforts in the area of development assistance, I should like to point out that in 1984 that assistance increased by 100 per cent over the previous year, 1983. In 1985 we attempted to consolidate that effort in spite of the fact that my Government had to continue to pursue an adjustment policy to meet the challenges of the international economic crisis.

With regard to Africa, we are in the midst of a phase of quantitative and qualitative change in two different but closely interrelated fields, each of which supplements the other. On the one hand, since 1 January this year Spain has been a member of the European Community. That has important and positive implications for Africa, since our traditional community effort in assisting that continent is now strengthened by Spain's special contributions within the framework of the Lomé III.

In addition, Spain, without altering its special relationships with Latin America, is also envisaging an expansion of its bilateral co-operation with Africa. In this area we have in recent years strengthened our actions in some North African countries and have also undertaken a massive effort in Equatorial Guinea, an effort unprecedented in our foreign-aid policy. In the near future, we intend to expand the scope of what have so far been isolated, minor actions in other sub-Saharan African countries.

In the next few years Spain intends to increase its resource flows to Africa, channelled either bilaterally or through the Community, to an amount equivalent to 70 per cent of the official development assistance it gave to all developing countries up to 1985. In view of my country's income level and the fact that it has persisting socio-economic problems, the effort that assistance represents and the firmness of our political will are clear.

(Mr. Yafiez Barnuevo, Spain)

However, our resources will of necessity be limited, and we must therefore apply strict and selective geographical and cultural criteria in order to ensure the effectiveness and positive impact of our aid.

We must not forget that there is a pressing need to improve the planning and implementation of co-operation programmes. Evaluations made show that a high percentage of projects turn out not to be viable. We must not forget that the avoidance of such failures is the principal way in which we can increase available resources, since we are thereby optimizing the cost-benefit ratio.

I do not wish to take up any more of our precious time. As the Netherlands Minister mentioned in her statement on behalf of the countries members of the European Community, Spain believes that the solution of the serious situation in Africa must be based on close consultation, the efforts of the African countries themselves and an appropriate international response.

Before concluding, I should like to reiterate Spain's concern at the seriousness of the situation in neighbouring countries with which we have special historical ties and to express my Government's hope that this session of the General Assembly will be an effective catalyst in creating the foundations for sustained and self-reliant growth in the African countries.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have to inform the Assembly that the Observer of the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States has asked to participate in the debate. In view of the fact that, as provided in the report of the Preparatory Committee adopted by the Assembly, the speakers' list was closed at 12 noon today, I should like to ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to including the name of the aforementioned Observer in the list of speakers. If I hear none, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees.

It was so decided.

Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji): Mr. President, you have already clearly demonstrated your considerable skills and tact during the fortieth session of the General Assembly. It is with great pleasure that I associate my delegation with the congratulations already expressed by preceding speakers. Within the few days allocated for this special session, we are confident that your leadership qualities will guarantee an effective and productive outcome.

While most developed countries continue to enjoy their comfortable standards of living, much of the developing world slides deeper and deeper into poverty, debt and deprivation. This disparity has destabilized many countries and poses grave dangers for all nations. It is a time-bomb that must be defused quickly, a task that must be tackled comprehensively and with collective determination. Eloquent rhetoric must be replaced by realistic and meaningful support and action, particularly by the "haves" of this world.

The causes of the economic ills of developing countries are many and complex. Some are due to such uncontrollable natural phenomena as drought and desertification; some to the vicious circle of poverty, lack of knowledge and underdevelopment. Others are due to mismanagement and, of increasing importance, to the denial of opportunity, through the erection of deliberate barriers against the products of developing countries. This rising protectionism, especially in developed market economies, will reduce or even close the most useful avenue we of the third world have for dignified development.

"A new beginning" was how the President of Senegal described Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery in his inspiring address this morning. A more purposeful spirit is energizing the vast continent of Africa. The willingness of the nations of Africa to carry out an incisive and realistic analysis of their problems and objectively examine their capabilities are important first steps in the process of self-sustaining recovery. It is heartening to my delegation to note

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

that the document produced by the Organization of African Unity and the final document of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 are forthright and honest and clearly analyse the causes of the current critical situation. The means necessary to provide solutions to set Africa on the road to economic recovery are also outlined. My delegation has been impressed by the thoroughness of the exercise and the considerable amount of soul-searching and priority setting it has entailed. As an indication of the way the countries of Africa are prepared to face facts, it indeed augurs well for the future of the continent.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

The international community has for some time now been rendering essential emergency relief to stricken areas in Africa. My delegation, like others, pays a tribute to the sterling work carried out by the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa under the able direction of Mr. Bradford Morse. It is clear that without this rapid response by the international community the situation would be far worse. But, while such aid brings immediate relief, it can be only temporary. The countries of Africa have therefore taken a bold and concerted step to find long-term solutions. The recovery will no doubt be painfully slow but, with the will and the determination that are being demonstrated, real and tangible progress should be visible in a relatively short time.

The recovery will, to a large extent, depend on the availability of resources. Because the economy of much of Africa is in a severely ravaged state, there is a limit to the resource input that can come from within. Nevertheless, the countries of Africa are confident of providing the major portion. The rest must obviously come from the international community. We sincerely hope that the international agencies will co-ordinate their activities to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of very scarce resources.

The world economy is so intimately interrelated that the ills or fortunes of one country have a significant impact on the rest. Taking the whole of Africa together, if its situation does not improve, the calamitous effect on the rest of the world will be dramatic and frightening. Consequently, even we, in our remote part of the Pacific, can readily accept that it is clearly in our interests, and indeed in the interests of the whole world, for Africa to be assisted and encouraged on to a path of strong, stable growth. It is an effort on behalf of us all, to which we must all be prepared to contribute.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

The human misery and suffering caused by the calamities that have befallen certain parts of Africa in recent years are not unknown in our region. We have our share, sometimes we think more than our fair share, of natural disasters, so we can empathize with their hardships. Only a fortnight ago a near neighbour, Solomon Islands, suffered a devastating cyclone, with tragic loss of life. Not a month before that, my country was battered by cyclone and flooding, which caused extensive disruptions to the economy and infrastructure. Other island States regularly go through the same cycles. Therefore, in whatever way we can, even if it is only by strong moral support, we will be fully behind the efforts of the countries of Africa to work their way towards economic recovery.

The main focus of the recovery programme rightly concentrates on strengthening agriculture, and in particular on improving the ability of the countries of Africa to feed themselves. It is a tragedy that food self-sufficiency in many countries has dropped substantially over the past decade, but with the new proposals this situation should be reversed. A high degree of self-sufficiency in food, for most of our agrarian-based economies, appears to be an important pre-condition of sustained economic development.

The fact that a special session on the critical economic situation in Africa is necessary at all provides a grim reminder to the world that problems should not be allowed to reach critical proportions before any concerted effort is made to tackle them. As we are talking about development, I am prompted to make a plea on behalf of the less visible, though no less vulnerable, regions and the small countries, in particular the developing island countries. Our problems are insignificant compared to those of the scale of Africa's, but we too need support, understanding and assistance, although on a much more modest scale. The moral we can see in this special session is that it is clearly preferable and much less

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

costly to give assistance and support early, before the problems become chronic and intractable.

A genuine compact of partnership between developed and developing countries must be fused. Two examples come easily to our mind when forms of international co-operation are considered. One is the Lomé Convention between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The other, in our part of the world, is the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA), the regional trade agreement between Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific Forum island countries. The two are examples of the sort of relationship that needs to be fostered to enable developing countries to earn their way towards a better way of life for their peoples.

The countries of Africa appear determined to take ambitious, and therefore risky, initiatives to get their development processes moving at an acceptable pace. Because the outcome of their efforts is of direct interest and concern to the whole world, we believe it is incumbent on the international community to give its fullest support with all the means at its disposal. And donor countries have a special responsibility to look generously at the supplemental assistance identified by African nations and accept the compact in the spirit in which it is offered. It is an opportunity that might not recur.

Ms. VEZINA (Canada) (interpretation from French): My first remarks are addressed to Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, and to the members of the Preparatory Committee, to whom I extend my sincere thanks for having organized this special session of the General Assembly.

We all know why we are gathered here today. The economic crisis in Africa concerns us all. In March 1985 we met in Geneva to respond to a call from Africa,

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

which had been stricken by a disastrous famine. Today, this food crisis, while not entirely behind us, is being resolved, and we are encouraged by this.

As it meets here today, at the request of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the international community is responding also to the deep concern of our peoples. Speaking for Canadians, emergency assistance for those who are dying of starvation is not enough. The people of Canada want us to move beyond the crisis to address its underlying causes.

I should like to give members some idea of how Canadians have responded to the African crisis of the past two years. I shall then address the economic policy proposals which African Governments themselves have put forward for the renewal of economic growth and development in the region. I shall then indicate how we foresee our contribution to the development of this continent.

Canadians have been deeply moved by the African crisis. The people of Canada have mobilized in an unprecedented way in an attempt to come to the aid of those stricken by this disaster. This response has taken many forms. First, there was the remarkable work of the news media, which, with perseverance, compassion and respect, awakened public awareness of the problem. There were also tens of thousands of offers of assistance from individuals, groups, institutions and provincial and municipal governments that felt compelled to help; trade unions, co-operatives, local groups, schools and universities spontaneously organized collections of funds and offered their assistance. More than \$60 million was collected from the general public in Canada. Our volunteer organizations involved in international co-operation spontaneously formed an Africa Emergency Assistance Committee. So widespread was this grass-roots reaction that our Government appointed a special co-ordinator to harmonize the activities of all the groups and organizations wishing to assist Africa. Later I shall refer to the lessons that we have learned from this experience.

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

I have briefly outlined the Canadian response to the African crisis. I should be remiss if I failed to mention how the Africans themselves have reacted to the situation, for the Governments and the peoples of Africa have been far from inactive - quite the contrary. The emergency assistance was administered and financed in the first instance by the Africans themselves. As soon as the rains resumed, Africa as a whole increased its grain production to 55 million tonnes, a 34 per cent increase over 1984. Countries with food surpluses, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Zimbabwe, shared then with fellow African countries. Need I say anything about the extraordinary example of solidarity that the African countries have always given the international community in receiving and assisting refugees?

Canada also attaches considerable importance to the fact that African Governments have themselves taken the lead in identifying long-term solutions and have made their own analyses of the fundamental problems. Our analysis has led us to identify many, if not most, of the same principal causes of the crisis.

The OAU has proposed the idea of joint responsibility, whereby assistance would be tied to tangible evidence of a determined desire to bring about necessary adjustments. Canada welcomes this approach and undertakes to support the African countries in their efforts. The level of resources that we shall commit to African development will continue to be substantial, and will be provided with increasing flexibility. Furthermore, since 1 April, pursuant to a decision made by the Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney, our official development assistance programme has been implemented entirely through grants.

The OAU recognizes that priority must be given to agricultural development, that policies must be adopted which will create the environment needed for that development and that agricultural research must be encouraged. For our part, we

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

shall give those matters top priority in our co-operative activities in Africa.

The OAU emphasizes the importance of continuing the struggle against drought and desertification and improving public investment policies. These are factors that we, too, consider essential to recovery.

The OAU mentions the role of women in development. As a Canadian Minister and as a woman, I regard this as a basic issue. How can African women contribute fully to the economic development of their continent if they are deprived of the technology, the financial resources and the training that they need?

The OAU also mentions the need for the private sector to play a part. Canada is currently undertaking a major review of its co-operation programmes. The philosophy underlying it is to examine ways in which we can more effectively engage the dynamism of our commercial enterprises and our voluntary organizations.

The OAU believes that the essential elements of a solution can be found by strengthening management institutions, reforming monetary and financial policies, introducing demographic policies and recognizing the characteristics peculiar to each region. How can Canada help but share that point of view?

We are heartened that the OAU speaks of the need for us jointly to improve the effectiveness of our development co-operation, especially with respect to programme support, the evaluation of technical assistance and the co-ordination of foreign aid.

The African countries are seeking an international economic environment that encourages growth, the elimination of protectionism and the institution of trade and agricultural policies favourable to the developing countries. Canada endorses those objectives. We shall continue to support the strengthening of growth-oriented policies through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

We are already committed to dealing with trade problems in a new negotiation within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). We are ready to explore, within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and at the level of World Bank programmes for structural adjustment, possible solutions to the problems facing raw materials producers.

Other major elements of the specific proposals made by the OAU are debt relief, support for reforms in Africa, financial support for priority programmes and follow-up mechanisms at both the national and the international levels. Canada also regards them as very important components of a solution.

However, understanding problems does not mean that they are solved. It is necessary to proceed to action - concerted action involving concrete measures.

I have spoken of the grave concern about the situation in Africa felt by Canadians. My Government was therefore confident that it had the full support of our people when it announced on 6 May the launching of an initiative that we call "Africa 2000". We should like that operation to be the symbol of international hope, hope that one day we shall have a green Africa. I invite the recipient and donor countries to join in. An amount of \$150 million of the Canadian International Development Agency's current funds has been made available exclusively for the operation over the next five years. That is in addition to the already impressive funds earmarked for our aid and co-operation programme on the African continent. It will bring to more than \$900 million the money, goods and services transferred from Canada to Africa in 1986-87 alone.

I announced in the Canadian House of Commons that that was only the first phase of our plan of action. I am happy to be able today to outline two additional measures that Canada plans to take immediately.

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

I have already spoken of the debt problem of the sub-Saharan countries, which is hindering their development and growth, with tragic consequences for their peoples. A significant part of that debt is made up of outstanding loans originally offered under official development assistance. Such debt to Canada totals more than 700 million Canadian dollars, and involves a burden for the countries concerned of 250 million dollars in repayments over the next 15 years. I am announcing today that Canada is offering to the sub-Saharan countries a moratorium on the repayment of those loans for an initial period of five years. We are prepared to extend that measure in five-year segments until the year 2000. We wish in this way to help give all the countries of Africa that face serious external payment difficulties and have demonstrated a commitment to undertake economic adjustment the room to manoeuvre that they need to put their economies back on a solid foundation.

We are prepared to begin discussing the application of this measure immediately, on a country-by-country basis, within the framework of World Bank consultative groups or in other appropriate forums.

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

This measure is a modest one, but it is practical and concrete. It is meant to reinforce the support that the international community will provide to countries that are making efforts to adjust. We hope that other countries will adopt similar measures.

The second measure I wish to announce relates to the lessons we have drawn from the food crisis in Africa. Over the past two years it has been evident to us that Africa's greatest strength lies in the determination, courage and experience of its people. It is the Africans themselves who are the masters and the architects of their future.

Our involvement in emergency operations has shown us that the villages, local communities, volunteer agencies and non-governmental organizations can play a strategic part in mobilizing Africa's human energies and involving them in the continent's own development. In Canada's "Africa 2000" programme, I announced our objective of introducing 2,000 small co-operation projects in Africa by the end of 1987. Our very first partners in this undertaking will be Canada's voluntary organizations, and that explains why their representatives are here as official members of our delegation.

Within the same context, Canada is at this session proposing to create a new mechanism within the multilateral aid system. Its role would be to make available to local communities, village councils and volunteer organizations in Africa funds and technical expertise to help them carry out projects of their own choosing to meet their needs in the fields of the struggle against desertification, the conservation of ground cover and food production. We are convinced that this new approach deserves our best efforts. Far from abandoning the traditional forms of our country-by-country assistance, in which we together attacked the problem of the under-equipping of Africa by implementing major development projects, we are simply saying that there is also room for innovation.

(Ms. Vezina, Canada)

Consequently we have asked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to help us define the details of such a facility for Africa. My Government is encouraged by the favourable response we have received from the new Administrator of UNDP, Mr. William Draper. He has assured us of his support in setting up a working group to elaborate that concept. We are grateful to him in that regard.

Canada is therefore prepared to contribute \$20 million over five years to such a new mechanism once it has been created. We hope that other Governments will want to take part in this initiative, either by contributing financially or by other means. A number of developing countries have already gained a great deal of experience in food production and social forestry. I trust they will be willing to share their expertise, their experience and resources with those in need in Africa.

We see this initiative as an act of faith in Africa's greatest asset, which is its population, its small producers, and its men and women farmers.

There is no crisis that does not hold promise. We will bear witness to this in this Assembly through our innovating and common action. That is my firm belief, and that of all of Canada. That is why, as Minister for External Relations and on behalf of my Government, I promise to do my utmost, looking ahead to what Africa can be in the year 2000, the Africa in which you and I believe: a green Africa in which it is good to live.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This special session of the United Nations General Assembly has been called to consider a question that is important and urgent for millions of people: the question of working out and approving a comprehensive programme for the solution of Africa's economic problems.

We in the Soviet Union have been following with great sympathy the grave situation in Africa, where the problems of backwardness, poverty, hunger, disease and horrifying infant mortality have reached critical proportions. We understand

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

the legitimate indignation of African peoples at stepping up neo-colonialist exploitation and the attempts of imperialism to use a sophisticated system of subjugation in order to regain control over the destinies of entire nations and peoples.

The documents of the twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stress that the desperate situation of many developing countries has become a major world problem. Yesterday's colonialists would like to use loans and credits to make African States bargain away their political independence, which they have won in a grim struggle against imperialism.

As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, noted recently, "This is also a kind of terrorism committed by imperialism; it is economic terrorism".

The so-called contribution of imperialism, and first of all United States imperialism, to African affairs is not confined to economic diktat. It manifests itself in acts of aggression, armed interference in the internal affairs of sovereign African States, in plots to overthrow progressive régimes, in fanning the flames of regional conflicts and hotbeds of tension, in the crimes committed by terrorists and mercenaries, in the bombs and rockets that have fallen on schools and child-care centres in Tripoli and Benghazi, in the hundreds of killed or wounded Libyan women and children, in the bloody raids of the South African racists against Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, in the millions of dollars spent on maintaining UNITA and other anti-Government gangs which have brought suffering and death to innocent Africans.

A serious and comprehensive analysis of the economic difficulties prevailing in Africa indicates that their real causes are rooted in the ills inherited from colonialism, in the merciless plunder and selfish policies pursued by former colonial Powers towards the African countries. Today there is an abundance of

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

studies convincingly demonstrating that the root causes of the African crisis originated in colonial times. That is demonstrated also by the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/S-13/2) presented to the special session.

The attempts of the African States to attain genuine economic independence have been opposed by the imperialist Powers and their monopolies, which pursue a deliberate neo-colonialist policy of exploiting the natural, human and financial resources of the continent.

The ending of neo-colonialist plunder is a vital necessity, an imperative of our time. The crisis faced by African countries cannot be overcome by new injections of financial assistance. That is not the way to cure the disease. Radical measures are required to eradicate its deep-seated causes, which were inherited from colonialism and are being engendered by neo-colonialism.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

Imperialism continues to thrive and solve its problems by plundering the developing countries, including African countries, exploiting them with utter ruthlessness. Suffice it to say that in Africa, where since 1980 the per capita income has been declining by an average of 4.1 per cent annually, every dollar invested by transnational corporations has paid a profit of \$3.50. As a result, the poor have become poorer and the rich richer in the world capitalist economy. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development, both of which are controlled by the West, are becoming increasingly involved in implementing that policy.

Africa has had to pay dearly for the so-called aid of Western countries and their monopolies and banks. They want to make Africa phase out the public sector and allow the predatory transnational corporations uncontrolled access to the economic life of African countries. The West is seeking to lay the entire blame for the present desperate situation on the African countries and to explain the crisis exclusively in terms of errors in their national development plans and an "excessive" emphasis on the public sector in their economies, which it claims interferes with the "healthy" play of free market forces.

We categorically reject all attempts to take advantage of the critical situation of African countries to interfere in their domestic and foreign affairs and ultimately to block the process of Africa's economic emancipation and undermine its economic security.

We fully support the just demands of African countries that the industrialized Western States compensate them for the damage caused to the economic and social development of the continent by the latter States' selfish, egoistic policies.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The policies of South Africa's racist régime are directly responsible for the critical economic situation of a large number of African countries. Those policies result in economic, political and military destabilization in southern Africa. The economic damage inflicted by the South African racist régime on the countries of the subregion has in the past five years alone exceeded \$10 billion, which is four times as much as the amount of assistance received by those countries from industrialized Western States in the same period.

As a result of United States and South African policies in Africa, many African countries have become involved in the arms race, which consumes huge financial and material resources and has a damaging impact on their economies. If the resources that are today wasted on the arms race - an astronomic sum of nearly \$1,000 billion annually - were to be channelled to peaceful purposes, famine, epidemics, illiteracy and economic backwardness could be overcome within a very short time.

The Soviet Union consistently and vigorously pursues its fundamental policy aimed at curbing the arms race, preventing its spreading to outer space, ensuring international security and putting into practice as soon as possible the principle "disarmament for development". The United States has now refused to participate in the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, but, the Soviet Union insists that it be held as scheduled.*

Our peace initiatives are well known. The programme for the complete and general elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, put forward by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, in his statement of 15 January 1986, is of historic importance.

* Mr. Guissou (Burkina Faso), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The Soviet Union believes that every measure in the field of disarmament should not only bring with it a greater measure of security, but also make it possible to release more funds for use in improving the standard of living and overcoming the backwardness of peoples, including, of course, the African peoples.

The Soviet Union has launched a major initiative regarding the establishment of a comprehensive system of international security in the military, political, economic and humanitarian spheres. Inherent in such a system is international economic security, and it provides for the exclusion from international practice of all forms of unlawful discrimination, the just solution of the foreign debt problem, the establishment of a new international economic order and the solution of other serious economic problems that affect the destiny of our civilization. We feel that it is important to convene at some time in the future a world congress on the problems of economic security at which it would be possible to discuss as a package all the problems affecting international economic relations.

In making these proposals we are thinking also of African countries whose economic security is in jeopardy. We are mindful, too, of the numerous instances of imperialists taking advantage of Africa's economic troubles to interfere in its internal affairs, of the United States and several other Western countries imposing illegal sanctions against Libya, of the economic blockade of Lesotho by South Africa's racist régime and of numerous other similar actions. As is justly stressed in the Declaration adopted at the Regional Conference on Security, Disarmament and Development, held in Lomé in 1985, the concept of security in Africa goes beyond the military aspects and should include the objectives of social and economic development. And, as has been demonstrated by the most recent acts of piracy committed by imperialists against African countries, it is but one step from economic pressure to direct military aggression.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

A close analysis of the roots of Africa's economic difficulties demonstrates convincingly that they are interrelated and complex and should therefore be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. The Declaration on the Economic Situation in Africa, adopted by the 21st session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, correctly mentions, among the major causes of Africa's economic problems, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the ensuing reduction of export earnings, the unprecedented rise in interest rates and sharp fluctuations in exchange rates. As a result of all those factors, the external debt of the African countries has become a serious problem, with some estimates putting it at almost \$200 billion. Indeed, the noose of debt is strangling Africa's already vulnerable economy and increasing the net outflow of financial resources from African countries, which, according to estimates by the Economic Commission for Africa, already exceeds \$9 billion annually.

According to the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, during the last 15 years, on average, the amount of transferred profits on direct foreign investment has been higher for Africa than for all other developing countries taken together. In the 1970s the outflow of financial resources from Africa exceeded the inflow by 80 per cent. In the period 1980 to 1983 direct foreign investment in African countries amounted to \$5.5 billion, while the outflow was four times higher, that is, \$22 billion, so that, the net outflow of resources through transnational corporations was \$16.5 billion.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

We share the view held by the countries participating in the twenty-first session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that

"a lasting solution to the continent's problems cannot be attained through short-term emergency measures alone".

We believe that those measures should be linked to the action to improve the overall international political and economic atmosphere and vigorous efforts to curb the arms race. These measures should also be closely linked with the efforts to improve and democratize international economic relations and to ensure international economic security on the basis of such fundamental United Nations documents as the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, and other important decisions adopted by the General Assembly in this field. Those measures should be interrelated with the implementation of the fundamental documents adopted at forums of African countries, particularly the Lagos Plan of Action.

The Soviet Union supports the proposal to convene an international conference on Africa's external debt. We believe that this problem should be considered in the context of a search for equitable ways of reaching a global settlement of the external debt of the third world as a whole.

We express our solidarity with the African countries' efforts to consolidate their sovereignty over their natural resources and all their economic activities and to limit the negative effects of the activities of foreign capital, above all transnational corporations. The strengthening of the role of the public sector, the wider use of planning in the economy, the increasing of efficiency in the management of national economies and the implementation of progressive social and economic changes, including democratic agrarian reforms, rather than the phasing out of the public sector as demanded by the West, is the shortest path to the overcoming of backwardness. In saying that, we are drawing upon our own experience.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

In our view, that would guarantee the success of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, adopted in 1985 by the twenty-first session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

We have always categorically opposed attempts to impose - especially through United Nations documents - on developing countries "models" of economic development alien to them. The choice of social and economic systems and economic policies is the undisputed sovereign right of each nation.

In Africa, like everywhere else in the world, our policy is open and honest. We regard the peoples that have thrown off the yoke of colonialism and embarked on the road of independent development as our friends and equal partners. The Soviet Union, within the framework of equitable co-operation and within the limits of its abilities, and in the forms consistent with its social system and recognized by the developing countries themselves, will continue to provide the peoples of Africa political support and economic assistance in their efforts to achieve genuine economic independence.

The Soviet Union has concluded intergovernmental agreements on economic and technical co-operation with 37 African countries. With Soviet assistance, more than 330 industrial plants have been built and put into operation in African countries, and about 300 are under construction or planned. These include power stations with an installed capacity of 4.6 million kilowatts, and industrial facilities capable of producing annually 4.1 million tons of pig iron, 4.5 million tons of steel, 2.4 million tons of rolled metal, 2.5 million tons of cement and 3 million tons of bauxite, and of processing 3 million tons of oil. The development of the industrial and energy sectors accounts for about 75 per cent of our total assistance.

In the 1980s, in the light of the seriously deteriorating food situation in the countries of the African continent, the Soviet Union has been increasing its assistance to African countries in the development of agriculture and related

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

agro-industrial sectors of the economy. The Soviet Union is assisting African countries in land reclamation and irrigation and in land improvement, as well as in the mechanization of agriculture. In the period 1986-1990 it is planned to triple the scope of co-operation in this field, especially with the sub-Saharan African countries.

More than 450,000 experts and skilled workers from Africa have received training, with Soviet assistance. More than 30,000 nationals of African countries have received higher and specialized secondary education in the Soviet Union, and 22,000 more now are studying in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has also provided assistance to African countries in establishing about 100 educational institutions.

The total volume of Soviet economic assistance to African countries, calculated on the basis of United Nations methodology, amounted to 1.2 billion roubles in 1985 - that is, approximately \$1.7 billion.

In providing credits, the USSR is not seeking for itself any privileges or concessions, control over the natural resources of other countries, or any profits. A considerable part of Soviet credits is paid back with export products of African countries, both traditional and non-traditional, as well as with products of enterprises built with Soviet assistance.

At the same time, aware of the objective monetary and financial difficulties faced by most countries of the continent, the Government of the USSR in 1981-1985 deferred debt payments totalling over 1.7 billion roubles - that is, about \$2.4 billion - including interest payments, on Soviet credits to African countries.

The Soviet Union is also providing grants. For example, Soviet drought-related assistance to Ethiopia, calculated on the basis of United Nations methodology, amounted to \$200 million on 1 January 1986.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The Soviet Union maintains trade relations with practically all African countries. South Africa is the only exception, because of its policy of racial discrimination against the indigenous population.

Trade relations with African countries continue to be strengthened. Intergovernmental trade agreements concluded by the Soviet Union with 40 African countries have contributed to that process. Trade with a number of countries is being conducted on a long-term basis.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

For the Soviet Union, co-operation with African countries and unselfish assistance to them is not a one-time event; it is a manifestation of our consistent policy of solidarity with newly independent States, a policy that is not subject to transitory political considerations. We shall continue to advocate the development of co-operation with African countries and the strengthening and expansion of their economies, so that Africa can cope successfully with its critical social and economic problems.

The Soviet delegation believes that the United Nations should work out an effective comprehensive programme for the solution of Africa's economic problems.

As has been stressed by Mikhail Gorbachev:

"It is the duty of the United Nations to do its utmost to promote the acceleration of the process of decolonization in the economic field and the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis."

We are ready to work actively and constructively with all interested delegations in carrying out the tasks facing the United Nations and ensuring a successful outcome of this special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. OKITA (Japan): Early this morning I arrived in New York from Ottawa, Canada, where I had attended another United Nations meeting - that of the World Commission on Environment and Development. That Commission is chaired by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the present Prime Minister of Norway, and the Vice-Chairman is Mansour Khalid of Sudan. We were 22 Commissioners and we discussed environment and development problems. Many of the issues are closely related to the African issue which we are taking up at this session. In fact, the Commission was set up three years ago on the initiative of the Japanese Government, and approved by the General Assembly in 1983. We shall be producing our report some

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

time next year and it will be discussed at the fall session of the General Assembly in 1987.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I should like, first of all, to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Jaime de Piniés on his assumption of the important post of the presidency of this special session. I hope and trust that under his able leadership this session will achieve the results that we all eagerly anticipate.

I should like also to express my profound appreciation to Mr. Abdou Diouf, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for the devoted efforts he has made since the 21st session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU in connection with the realization and preparation of this session. I also wish to pay a high tribute to Mr. Edgard Pisani, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, for his valuable contributions in preparing for this session.

It is a great pleasure for me to have an opportunity once again to discuss development issues with representatives of other United Nations Member States six years after my attendance at the eleventh special session of the United Nations General Assembly, in 1980, as head of the Japanese delegation.

The United Nations, which commemorated its fortieth anniversary last year, is now at a turning point in every respect. Although reference is sometimes made to the sluggishness that has marked the North-South dialogue in recent years, the international co-operation and assistance extended in response to the economic crisis in Africa over the past several years stand as a very good example of North-South co-operation.

Although many African countries seem to be emerging from the critical situation, it is essential that they continue with firm determination to strengthen

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

their efforts to overcome their structural economic difficulties and to promote economic reconstruction and development. The co-operation and assistance provided by the international community should serve to encourage and support those self-reliant efforts.

In this context, Japan regards this session as an excellent opportunity to ensure that a realistic and constructive North-South dialogue takes root, and hopes that it will impart a fresh momentum to and other new prospects of future North-South relations, as well as assistance activities in favour of Africa.

We know from our own historical experience in Japan that the will to stand on one's own feet is of crucial and, indeed, overriding importance in overcoming a crisis and embarking on a successful course for development. Geographically, Japan belongs to the Asian-African region, and last year Japan participated in the commemorative meeting in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference - the so-called Bandung Conference - which called for solidarity between Asia and Africa. Incidentally, I participated in that Asian-African Conference some 30 years ago as one of the junior members of the Japanese delegation. I believe Japan has an important global mission to act as a bridge between the North and the South.

Japan was very encouraged by the adoption at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa. It welcomed the opportunity to serve, at the request of African countries, as co-ordinator of the consultations and to work for the adoption by consensus of that historic Declaration.

As host to the recent summit conference of the seven major industrialized countries held in Tokyo, Japan took the initiative in focusing attention on the economic situation in Africa. As a result, the Tokyo Economic Declaration

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

acknowledged the importance of assistance to Africa for medium- and long-term economic development and affirmed the intention of the seven countries to participate actively in this special session.

As stated clearly in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which the Heads of State and Government of the OAU member States adopted last year, the unprecedented crisis in Africa did not arise solely from occasional natural disasters, such as drought, but is the result of a variety of structural and historical factors.

Both the Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and the Harare Declaration, adopted in 1984 at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Conference for Africa, acknowledge that the Governments and peoples of Africa bear the primary responsibility for the rehabilitation and development of the African economy and are determined to make self-reliant efforts to achieve their objectives.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

This determination of African countries to make self-reliant efforts deserves a high tribute and I am convinced that the peoples of Africa, with their indomitable spirit, will overcome the present hardships and prepare the way for a better future.

I am pleased to note that the Priority Programme, emphasizing the need for policy reform, places highest priority on the agricultural sector for the rehabilitation and revitalization of the African economy and allots almost half of its total investment to that sector. Agricultural development will result in greater self-sufficiency in food and help to avoid the disaster of recurring famine. At the same time, it will help to strengthen the purchasing power of rural inhabitants, who represent the majority of the African population, enhance the infrastructure of the rural economy and accelerate the participation of the rural population in the process of national economic development.

It is clear that greater agricultural productivity will help to stabilize the national economy as a whole and expand the potential of financial and human resources, as well as contribute to industrial development and the rehabilitation of the transportation and communications infrastructure.

As indicated in the African Priority Programme, these efforts to improve agricultural production and promote rural development must be supported by measures that would; first, improve storage facilities for the preservation of agricultural products; secondly, rehabilitate and maintain the transportation and communication infrastructure to ensure adequate delivery of agricultural products to areas of the domestic market where those products are needed; and, thirdly, rehabilitate and develop the industries for the production of agricultural tools and fertilizers.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

The Priority Programme emphasizes the importance of inter-African co-operation in addition to endeavours at the national level. I believe that inter-African co-operation should be vigorously promoted by the existing regional organizations for co-operation. It should also be pointed out that consideration of African assistance extended by the international community must not overlook the economic and technical assistance that is being provided not only by Western industrialized countries but also by other industrialized countries and by developing countries as well. Indeed, economic and technical co-operation among developing countries should be further strengthened, in recognition of the fact that assistance to Africa for development is not a regional issue but rather a problem to be addressed on a global basis.

Japan is of the view that in the international community, where interdependence is increasing at an accelerated pace, there can be no prosperity for the North without prosperity for the South. In particular, Japan regards the severe drought in Africa as being no less a menace to world peace and stability than armed conflict.

From this point of view, Japan quickly extended emergency aid to ease the unprecedented food crisis in Africa. Furthermore, it has strengthened its efforts to extend assistance to Africa based on medium- and long-term objectives, the importance of which Japan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Shintaro Abe, stressed in the urgent appeal for assistance to Africa that he made in November 1984.

Understanding of and interest in Africa among the Japanese people have increased dramatically in recent years. Last year such events in Japan as Africa Week and the United Nations symposium on Africa further heightened public interest in that continent, and this autumn an African festival is planned. Activities of Japanese non-governmental organizations and volunteers, including the campaign that resulted in the collection of 1.7 million blankets to be sent to Africa,

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

strengthened solidarity between the African and Japanese peoples. By the way, in addition to the blankets there were monetary contributions amounting to over \$US 50 million from the Japanese general public, and we see this as a very encouraging sign.

Japan continues its efforts to enhance its ties with African countries in terms of economic relations, economic co-operation and people-to-people exchanges. The ratio of Japan's bilateral official development assistance to Africa to its global official development assistance has increased by about four times; and the amount Japan contributed to Africa in 1984, compared with 1973, about 10 years earlier, increased more than ten-fold. This reflects Japan's increasingly close relations with African countries in various fields, and the trend is expected to continue in the future.

In an effort to help overcome the difficulties confronting Africa, Japan expressed its intention to extend in fiscal year 1985 bilateral grant assistance of around \$US 350 million, in yen at the current rate of exchange, to sub-Saharan Africa; and it set a target of roughly \$US 100 million in yen loans to be extended on the one hand in co-ordination with the World Bank and other international financial institutions and on the other in co-ordination with technical assistance. I am pleased to say that the level of Japanese assistance for fiscal year 1985 substantially surpassed the targets set. Japan announced last September the third medium-term official development assistance target, the aim of which is to increase the total official development assistance to more than \$US 40 billion for the seven-year period to come. From 1986 through 1992 the amount of official development assistance disbursed will be increased more than two-fold, because of Japan's greater gross national product, which is now nearly half that of the United States at the current rate of exchange. Our Government feels that general

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

assistance to the developing world should be stepped up very substantially in the coming years and we have this plan to double official development assistance for the coming seven years.

In accordance with the third medium-term target, Japan intends to increase considerably its assistance to Africa this fiscal year as compared with last year. There will definitely be an increase this year.

Fully recognizing the importance of improving food production and agricultural development, overcoming the food shortage and improving transportation, Japan has extended and expanded its assistance and intends to continue to do so. Furthermore, in providing assistance to Africa, which embraces 70 per cent of all the least-developed countries, Japan will hereafter give priority to basic human needs, that is, in such fields as medical and health services, education and water supply, in addition to food and agriculture.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

Japan believes that human resources development is the basis for nation-building and that, although it may seem otherwise, it is the quickest way to develop the economic and social structure of a nation, which is basically the product of human activity. It is on the basis of this belief that Japan has always promoted co-operation in human resources development. Incidentally, about a month ago at the United Nations I delivered a Paul Hoffman memorial lecture on "The role of the human element in the development process: Japan's experience". The text of that lecture will be issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the near future.

Japan has been promoting such co-operation in Africa by dispatching experts and Japan overseas co-operation volunteers. In fact, Japan sends a greater number of volunteers to Africa than to any other region of the world and is working to double within three years of 1985 the number of countries to which we send them. In addition, Japan regards as an effective measure the establishment of key stations for human resources development co-operation in various places and will consider ways and means of co-operating in human resources development on the African continent. In this regard, Japan intends to send missions to study the feasibility of establishing a human resources development centre in Africa.

I should like to report on the real progress made in developing the Green Revolution for Africa programme that Japan announced in June of last year following the Bonn summit. It should be recognized that, although the potential of African agriculture is immense, the agricultural environment in Africa is very grave owing to such problems of nature as irregular rainfall, soil erosion and desertification. These great natural constraints on Africa's agriculture make it all the more important that we bring about the green revolution. The green revolution in Asia during the past 10 to 15 years has been a success, and there should be no reason why the green revolution in Africa should not be successful too.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

As regards the strengthening of agricultural research activities, which constitutes the first element in the Green Revolution for Africa, Japan is extending co-operation to those African universities and research institutions which concern themselves with agriculture, and it intends to make financial contributions to the special research programmes envisaged by the various organs of the International Agricultural Research Consultative Group.

Secondly, as regards the promotion of reforestation, Japan has extended technical assistance in the field of afforestation and plans to dispatch a "green corps", the members of which will engage in afforestation projects. It also intends to provide financial assistance to the field project on regional social forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and to the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Of all the nations of the world, Japan has the highest percentage of its area covered by forest, and we have accumulated a great deal of experience in this area.

Thirdly, assistance for the formulation of appropriate national development plans presupposes the collection of relevant information on agriculture, as well as on forests and water resources. Accordingly, Japan intends to make a financial contribution to the FAO project aimed at strengthening the early warning system in Africa, by means of remote sensing. The usefulness of that system was demonstrated during the recent food crisis.

The fourth element of the Green Revolution for Africa is the improvement of the infrastructures of rural and agricultural development. Between 1980 and 1984 Japan more than quadrupled the amount of bilateral grant aid for the improvement of transportation and storage facilities, and intends to continue to strengthen its efforts in that area. Furthermore, it plans to make a contribution to the World Food Programme (WFP) to enable it to provide means of transportation to African countries.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

Lastly, as regards the provision of support to policy reforms for rural development and increased assistance to small farmers, Japan is providing assistance for small-scale integrated rural development projects, particularly those which are directed at helping small farmers, with a view to enhancing the awareness and promoting the active participation of farmers in the process of agricultural development. Again, most of our farmers are small farmers; we do not have large-scale farming. However, our experts feel that some of our experience in small farming will be relevant in Africa's case.

The United Nations organs and specialized agencies have networks of local offices extending throughout the continent of Africa. Through the assistance activities that they oversee, they have accumulated extensive information and a wealth of experience. The reports on the economic situation in Africa submitted by multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, FAO and the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, and the development strategies that they have recommended, are valuable, since they provide fundamental data and relevant perspectives and guidelines for international assistance activities. It should also be pointed out that the assistance provided by these international co-operative agencies is different in nature from bilateral assistance in respect of both the views on which it is based and the form it takes.

Therefore my Government has been making efforts to strengthen its financial contribution to such international organizations. This fiscal year the Government of Japan decided to increase its voluntary contributions to UNDP, FAO, WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) by about 12 per cent over the last fiscal year, to a total of approximately \$US 200 million contribution to multilateral institutions. We estimate that approximately 30 per cent of that sum will be directed to activities relating to Africa.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

Also, my Government has decided to provide once again this year assistance in the form of special joint financing with the Special Facility for Sub-Saharan Africa of the World Bank with a view to supporting the policy reform efforts of the countries in the region. This assistance in fiscal year 1986 will be at a level of 15.7 billion yen, that is, approximately \$US 90 million.

In the activities that the international community is undertaking to provide assistance to Africa, international organizations are expected to play an important role, similar to that of donor countries. The United Nations system, multilateral development financing agencies such as the World Bank, and the African Development Bank themselves possess both multinational staff and budgetary resources for assistance activities relating to Africa. They also have responsibility for co-ordinating at the field level the assistance provided by various donor countries and international agencies.

In order effectively to utilise the limited funds available and eliminate extravagance and redundancy, we expect that the co-ordination of activities among the donors and international agencies will be effected by core agencies such as UNDP and the World Bank, with the goal of promoting the medium- and long-term economic development of Africa.

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

Japan fully recognizes that the recent decline in the resource flow to Africa and the increase in the debt service burden constitute a severe constraint on Africa's stable economic development in the future.

I believe that solving the debt problem requires durable measures to be implemented in co-ordination and co-operation with all the parties concerned, and on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the respective situations of the debtor countries. Japan for its part intends to give full consideration to solving the debt problem in Africa.

Unfortunately, I cannot be as explicit as Ms. Vezina of the Canadian delegation, who spoke earlier this afternoon. But it is definitely our intention to contribute to the solution of the debt problem of African countries.

It is necessary that African countries make appropriate policy-reform efforts with a view to realizing growth-oriented and market-oriented structural improvements on a medium- and long-term basis. Moreover, creditor countries, multilateral financing institutions and others should support these self-reliant efforts by increasing the resource flow and by strengthening their policy advisory functions.

In this connection, Japan welcomes the establishment of the Structural Adjustment Facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and expects the immediate realization of the Eighth Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) at a level of \$12 billion, based on the principle of fair burden-sharing among contributing countries.

As Mr. Abdou Diouf, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), stated at the twenty-first session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government last year, Africa has undeniable economic potential. The kind of economic difficulties it is now facing is therefore a paradox. It is the foremost task of the African people to resolve this paradox and to transform the continent

(Mr. Okita, Japan)

where mankind originated into a place of hope and prosperity as it moves towards the twenty-first century. This is an enterprise which the international community should join hands in assisting.

It is important that the future progress of the self-reliant efforts of African countries and of assistance by the international community be followed up effectively through the appropriate mechanisms already in existence. Whatever decisions or commitments this special session may result in, they must be translated into concrete action. Only then can they help to strengthen and nurture the economy of Africa, as the peoples of that continent work towards a promising future.

Mr. FILALI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): For the first time in the history of our Organization, the General Assembly of the United Nations has come together in special session to focus on a comprehensive and integrated analysis of the critical economic situation in Africa. My delegation understands why this unprecedented session is being held at the ministerial level and the human tragedy in the African continent is receiving unprecedented international attention. Aware of the special importance of his mission, my delegation is pleased to congratulate the President on his unanimous election to the presidency of this historic session. It also congratulates all the members of the General Committee. At the same time, it wishes to convey its esteem to the members of the Preparatory Committee, who have given their best energies, in sometimes delicate circumstances, in order to initiate a process of negotiation unparalleled in the history of international relations. I assure the President of our support, and express our sincere hope that the results of this session will be in keeping with the hopes Africa and the world have placed in it.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

We wish at the same time to renew our faith in our Organization and its Secretary-General, who has shown a unique capacity for mobilizing the international community around one of the greatest challenges of modern times.

I could not state the position of the Kingdom of Morocco without expressing our admiration for President Abdou Diouf, who has made tireless efforts throughout the year in the service of Africa. He has reaffirmed the resolve of the entire African continent in its diversity to rise to the challenge of survival and development, while defining the responsibilities it bears before history for the joint realization of African development, development which is rooted, self-centred and self-sustained at the national and continental levels.

While the General Assembly has in the interests of efficiency limited its area of analysis to the economic aspects of the African crisis, how can we ignore the untenable régime of apartheid, which in its persistent challenge to the conscience of mankind continues to subject southern Africa to permanent insecurity and to divert its energies from the vital tasks of peaceful co-operation and economic recovery? And how can we remain silent when the consequences of its colonial past continue even today to handicap Africa in its efforts to ensure its mastery over its economic potential and to attain full sovereign independence?

More than any other region in the world, Africa is immeasurably indebted to the United Nations, which has played an irreplaceable role in the decolonization of the continent, in the condemnation of racial segregation, in the mobilization of emergency aid and in contributing to multi-faceted long-term aid for development. The United Nations has in the recent past adopted measures for special assistance for many African countries and a Plan of Action to combat drought and desertification and has proclaimed Decades on industrial development and transport and communications in Africa.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

Given the worsening of the economic and social situation in the African region, which has always been known as the least developed continent of the planet, we found it necessary to convene this special session so that the international community could draw the logical conclusions.

As the only institution in the world that can come to grips with the component parts and totality of a stricken continent's drift towards poverty, the United Nations is for Africa a unique place where suffering can be alleviated and respect for the human person maintained.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

At a time when we are living through a profound crisis in multilateral co-operation, Morocco believes it useful to stress that no assistance to the peoples concerned generated by this session can be honourable if, under the guise of selective bilateralism, it represents an interference in matters that come under their sovereignty. We therefore reaffirm the sovereign right of all peoples to choose and freely implement a policy they consider appropriate to ensure their development, adapted to their national plans and priorities, in keeping with their cultural identity, their socio-economic structure and their stage of development. We also reaffirm the principle embodied in the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States of the permanent sovereignty of African countries over their wealth, natural resources and economic activities, as well as their inalienable right to choose their political, economic, social and cultural systems in accordance with the will of their peoples, without outside interference, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever.

In addition, international assistance, necessary as it may be, especially in the specific circumstances of Africa, cannot be equated with or replace the establishment of more just and equitable economic regulations in the interdependent areas of monetary and financial questions, foreign debt, resource flows, trade, commodities and development. It has been rightly said that the real impetus for development rests less with aid, concessional as it may be, than with the establishment of a more propitious international environment.

That is why the cause of Africa is closely intertwined with that of the whole of the developing world, which has issued the same challenge to ignorance, poverty, hunger and slums; a challenge to disease, to natural disasters and to desertification; a challenge to the consequences of colonialism, to apartheid and hegemonism; a challenge to economic chaos, to social injustice and to the

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

alienating materialism that reduces man to the level of a producing machine; a challenge to acts of interference, to greed and to resentments; a challenge, finally, to the arms race, to war, to all wars. That common challenge cements the natural solidarity of the developing world in the building of a more just international economic order and a better future for succeeding generations. While Africa is the third continent in the third world, and in spite of the imperatives of recovery dictated by urgency and need, African development is indivisible and cannot be separated from the platform jointly drawn up by the Group of 77 as a whole.

International commitments to Africa are the very raison d'être of this special session, while domestic reforms freely undertaken by African countries will have little effect if they do not, accompanied by outside assistance, form an indivisible whole proportionate to needs in an international environment likely to lead to the mobilization of energies. Indeed, the international community has recognized that, in spite of its considerable economic potential, Africa, according to every socio-economic indicator, remains the least favoured continent among developing regions, with three fourths of the less-advanced countries in the world and more than two thirds of the world's land-locked countries, while the scourges of drought and desertification periodically ravage vast areas to the point that half of the States of Africa are facing critical and permanent food shortages.

At the same time, Africa is the only region in the world where food production is increasing at a slower pace than population and the only continent where living standards have declined, to such an extent that the average income in Africa today is lower than it was in 1970.

The continued existence of colonial-type relations has led to harmful imbalances in all sectors of economic activity, principally in agriculture and industry. Thus, today the alienation of the African rural areas means that one of

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

every five Africans depends for his survival on imported food that absorbs a fourth of export receipts, thereby generating a devastating spiral of accelerated underdevelopment. Africa is also the least industrialized region of the world. In most African countries, the industrial sector is still a partially foreign, and above all an urban, enclave within a vast sea of rural backwardness that includes a heterogeneous set of burdensome units that are often a drain on foreign exchange. In addition, the action of African Governments, notwithstanding the courageous reforms they have taken to improve their economies, is being inhibited by a conjunction of phenomena beyond their control - the extent of debt servicing and the inverse transfer of financial flows, the untenable deterioration in the terms of trade, protectionism and the brutal fall in commodity prices, which has not been equalled in the past 40 years.

Thus, until the developed countries ensure that their economic policies are compatible with the goals of development, no real progress can be achieved in the developing world, nor, a fortiori, in its most vulnerable part, Africa.

All those factors, along with many others, clearly demonstrate that it is improbable that reforms in domestic policies alone can avoid the recurrence of further African tragedies. The future of Africa, the financing of its recovery and the implementation of its development are therefore the joint responsibility of the countries of the region and of the international community, without exception.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose ancient roots are thrust deep into the land of Africa, has taken as its permanent task, one enshrined in its Constitution, the achievement of unity, peace and co-operation in Africa. In that spirit, the bilateral and regional co-operation my country is developing with other African countries, despite its limited means, stands as a glowing example and has taken various forms: a substantial financial contribution to the Plan of Action of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to meet the critical economic situation in

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

Africa, grants to the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, loans to finance infrastructure projects, grants of transport equipment, participation in mining projects, the training of personnel, technical assistance, the furnishing of medical and veterinary supplies, food aid of all types, the supply of fertilizers and debt moratoriums.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

Moreover, wishing to reinforce by all possible means economic co-operation among developing countries, Morocco reaffirms its proposal set forth before the Non-Aligned Movement to establish a programme of action for agricultural and food self-sufficiency focused on products that constitute the nutritional bases of developing peoples, by pooling their respective technical, investment, and human resources. This programme of action will be the main item on the agenda of the Third Non-Aligned Conference on Food and Agriculture, to be held in Morocco from 28 to 31 July next. In specific terms, this involves achieving mutually advantageous joint agricultural projects to exploit fertile land, to restore regions stricken by drought and to reforest those threatened with desertification; and joint maritime fishing ventures in which land-locked developing countries may participate, established on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of States over their natural resources.

First, with regard to maritime fishing, we know that the Atlantic coast of Africa is one of the richest in fishing resources and that it is subject to systematic plundering by countries outside Africa. Protected and exploited by its rightful owners, the African coast could make a significant contribution to eradicating hunger and malnutrition on our continent. Hence Morocco considers that it is necessary to establish among all States of the region a forum for co-operation, technical exchanges and harmonization of policies for the joint regional development of this prospect for the future, thus preserving our renewable resources and guaranteeing our sovereignty over our natural resources.

Secondly, at this special session Morocco wishes to announce that, in order to develop inter-African horizontal trade, it has decided unilaterally to reduce its customs duties by 50 to 100 per cent on products that have a minimum added value of 40 per cent originating from the least developed countries, most of which, as everyone knows, are African.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

Thirdly, Morocco, which attaches the greatest importance to the development of human resources in Africa, has long been active in this field. It has trained thousands of African professionals and intends to step up its efforts in this connection.

Finally, having in mind enhancing the effects of international aid, Morocco suggests organizing, with the co-operation of bilateral and multilateral donors, triangular operations that would make it possible to give priority utilization to available technical and human resources among African countries.

In this way we wish to make a modest contribution to curing our continent of some of its ills by working towards harmonizing efforts aimed at developing the vital sector of food, investing in the human potential by means of education and training, liberalizing South-South trade and improving conditions for international assistance.

The kind of food imports and food aid thus far have given rise to habits and patterns of consumption that Africa cannot sustain from its own soil, climate or techniques. Moreover, with the highest population growth in history, Africa's current population will have tripled in 40 years. Having inherited outward-looking production models, Africa is producing what it does not consume and is consuming what it does not produce. Thus, the factors which determine lifestyles and consumption patterns must quite obviously be integrated in the general system for the long-term development of the continent. In the short term, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 is limited to putting the fundamental socio-economic needs at the top of the list of national priorities and international concerns.

These fundamental, compelling and unquestionable needs are, especially in Africa, of such scope and urgency that they cannot be met without massive and

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

immediate action, including both national efforts and international co-operation, as well as the restructuring of global economic relations.

Specifically, the very fact that for the first time our Assembly is meeting in a special session to take up the critical situation of a developing continent means, in and of itself, that Africa must receive special treatment directed towards action, including concrete commitments in keeping with the expectations of hundreds of millions of Africans.

Hence it is inconceivable that the final declaration on the work of this session should be limited to juxtaposing the African commitments to a simple counterpart offer without substance.

Some statements that were made prior to our special session are not likely to evoke optimism. Although we expected to see here the unleashing of synergistic co-operation unprecedented in the history of international relations, we are being told that, at best, Africa will enjoy rhetorical support, conditional promises and parsimonious assistance out of proportion to the scope of its pressing and inescapable needs.

If such is the case, we shall be witnessing the triumph of the supporters of co-operation characterized by inaction and allowing a unique historic opportunity to slip by while in Africa there remain unbearable tragedies posing a fatal threat to peace. The Assembly is aware, for example, that yearly expenditures on weapons correspond to twice the amount of investments made in all the third-world countries and that three days of weapons production would easily make it possible to finance the assistance Africa needs, as expressed in its Programme for Economic Recovery. In fact, we know that for every dollar devoted to development aid for confidence-building, the developed countries are spending \$20 to build the instruments of certain mass destruction. It is high time for these countries to

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

admit that at a cost of more than \$1,000 billion per year the suicidal arms race will not bring any additional security, and that restrictions on development assistance are surely undermining world peace.

At this time when excessive criticism is being levelled against our Organization and specific threats are weighing on its very existence, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its faith in the aims and ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter, which have made such a decisive contribution to the decolonization of Africa and which today remain fully valid to complete the process of decolonization by giving our continent the means to enable it to overcome the crisis that has been caused by the most extensive change in our history.

Mrs. HJELM-WALLEN (Sweden): During the last few years the attention of the world has been drawn to the emergency situation facing many African countries. Over a million people have died and several more millions have been seriously affected. The immediate crisis has now been alleviated. In this context, the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa has played an important role.

When looking towards the future we must learn from the past. In order to avoid new emergency situations, long-term structural problems must be solved. Such solutions are equally essential for the realization of the development potential of Africa.

This special session is a unique expression of the concern of the international community for the economic future of Africa and its people. We must seize this opportunity to analyze and decide together on measures that can be taken collectively and by individual countries to promote the development of African countries, of which the sub-Saharan countries merit particular attention. In the submission of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (A/AC.229/2, annex) to this special session, the African States have expressed their views on how to achieve lasting economic development and rehabilitation in Africa. This important document offers us a realistic basis when formulating joint political commitments towards Africa.

Let me first address the problem of agriculture, because measures must first be taken to increase food production.

The first, top priority must be rehabilitation efforts within the agricultural and supportive sectors, as outlined in the African document. We all know that the per capita production of food in many African countries has decreased. This is partly explained by the drought and other environmental factors. It is also a result, however, of development policies that have favoured urban development and neglected to stimulate agricultural production.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

We welcome the fact that many African countries are now re-examining their development policies, with special emphasis on agricultural and rural development. If food production is to be increased, a policy more favourable to the farmers is necessary. Such a policy should include the establishment and strengthening of incentive schemes and better agricultural pricing.

Women have a great responsibility for agricultural production. They are, however, often neglected in development policies. For this reason efforts must be directed to a greater extent to improving the situation of women. Particular attention should be given to ensuring their access to and control of such productive resources as land, capital and credit. Such measures will increase women's possibilities of influencing the development process, which in my view will benefit all members of society.

A second area to which we must attach particular priority concerns the protection and, where possible, restoration of the environment. Desertification, deforestation and soil erosion are threats to survival in Africa. Neglect of the environment today will severely hamper the possibilities of sustainable development tomorrow.

There is a close relationship between poverty, increase in population and the degradation of the environment. It is the present rate of population growth in Africa that makes the structural crisis so intractable. It increases food deficits, and the pressure on vulnerable soils and contributes to rapid urbanization. If programmes of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources are to succeed, the pressure of population in ecologically sensitive areas must be brought under control.

Awareness of the need to halt the environmental degradation has increased. Environmental concerns must be an integral part of all development planning and be taken into account in all areas of development.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

In order to increase our knowledge of the complex relationships involved, the Swedish Government has initiated a long-term research programme related to desertification and deforestation in a global perspective. A central element in this research programme will be the strengthening of research institutions in some developing countries.

A third area to which we must devote particular attention is the long-term employment situation in Africa. We are already witnessing an exodus from rural areas, resulting in rapid urbanization. This process will probably accelerate in the future. African countries will have to take measures to increase employment in the industrial and service sectors as well as within the agricultural sector. This is necessary in order to counteract new poverty problems that risk creating social tensions in vulnerable societies.

A fourth problem with serious consequences for the region of southern Africa is the military and economic destabilization measures carried out by South Africa against neighbouring States. These measures have seriously impeded development in many countries in southern Africa, not least in the field of agriculture and food supply. Trade and communication between the countries in southern Africa, as well as efforts to develop the industrial sector, are hampered.

The aggregated costs of the destabilization measures against the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) countries have been estimated at \$US 10 billion by the SADCC secretariat. Ways have to be found to implement the resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council on compensation from South Africa. In the view of the Swedish Government, South Africa's destabilization policy constitutes a threat to international peace and security. This policy must come to an end. The abolition of the apartheid system is not only a matter of freedom in South Africa, but also a prerequisite for the region's development.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

The fifth important area for action is the refugee situation in Africa. As a consequence of other problems, more than one third of all the refugees in the world, or 5 million people, are to be found in Africa. In addition to drought, the apartheid system and destabilization actions of South Africa, ethnic conflicts, wars and political unrest have forced people to leave their homes and live in camps or other temporary dwellings.

The African countries are thus confronted by serious problems in both the short term and the long term. It is obvious that they must re-examine their development policies and priorities. In many cases they have to bring about radical policy changes in order to promote structural transformation and increase the present widespread low level of productivity.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

Responsibility for the necessary reforms must rest with the African countries themselves. The African submission to the special session bears witness to the preparedness of African Governments to reconsider the orientation of their policies and to enhance the mobilization of domestic resources. The Swedish Government welcomes this, since external support can be efficient only when the recipient countries are prepared to bring about the needed reforms.

The Swedish Government agrees that the donor community as a whole must face the fact that Africa's crisis is a joint responsibility. The tasks facing the African Governments are of such a magnitude and complexity that we have to work together - African Governments, international organizations and donor countries.

There is no doubt that the African countries need, and can rightfully claim, additional assistance to support their substantial structural reforms. In recent years, however, the official development assistance flows to sub-Saharan countries have stagnated. That is not acceptable. An increase in aid to the poorest countries must be a special concern of the international community.

The Swedish Government therefore sincerely hopes that one of the basic results of this special session will be a broad commitment on the part of the donor countries to increase their official development assistance to the African countries. This should be done within the framework of efforts to achieve the 0.7 per cent target and the target of 0.17 per cent for assistance to the least developed countries adopted by the General Assembly.

Sweden, for its part, devotes more than 60 per cent of its total bilateral development assistance - or approximately \$420 million for the next fiscal year - to African countries south of the Sahara. Through the multilateral system we are also giving substantial support to development activities in the region. We are prepared to increase further our assistance to Africa during the years to come.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

I should like to emphasize that there is a very strong case for allowing the multilateral institutions to play a more active role in assisting the African countries to find ways out of the crisis. The multilateral institutions must be strengthened to cope with the problems, which no individual country can handle alone.

All international organizations must mobilize resources in support of the African countries. In particular I should like to emphasize the role played by the International Development Association (IDA) in regard to the poorest countries of Africa. The Swedish Government is of the opinion that donors should commit themselves to an IDA-8 replenishment of at least \$12 billion, part of which should be used for lending for structural reforms.

We also believe that the resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should be increased. The Special African Programme set up by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) also deserves wider support.

The African document has highlighted the debt problems of the low-income African countries. We concur with the view that for many African countries the debt problems are a serious impediment. These problems clearly call for special action.

Sweden is prepared to participate in internationally co-ordinated programmes to alleviate the debt problems of the poorest developing countries. Such programmes should be based on structural reform measures in the developing countries directed towards growth and adjustment with a human face. Sweden has already converted all its official development assistance credits to African countries to grants. Within our increasing programme for development co-operation, Sweden has also set aside funds for further debt relief.

(Mrs. Hjelm-Wallen, Sweden)

Increased technical and financial assistance for the low-income African countries should be our prime concern. But there is also a need for continued efforts to attack protectionism and dismantle trade barriers.

I hope that at this special session the General Assembly will reach agreement on a number of important measures needed to restore growth with equity, particularly in the low-income African countries. Intensified co-operation between those countries and the industrialized countries is needed.

As I have already stated, the development of the African continent is primarily the responsibility of the African countries themselves. We fully realize, however, that every national effort must be reinforced through action by the international community. Sweden is therefore committed to increasing substantially its assistance to its partners in Africa over the next years. We are also prepared to play a constructive role to make the outcome of this special session a manifestation of the joint responsibility of African countries and the international community for Africa's future.

Mr. KUSUMAATMADJA (Indonesia): Having fully supported the Assembly resolution to convene this special session at the ministerial level, we are deeply aware of its great significance. Our participation reflects the grave concern of Indonesia at the critical economic situation in Africa and the utmost importance we attach to its resolution. I would also like to take this opportunity to compliment the African countries on their thorough and serious preparations to make this special session a success.

The enormity of the prolonged economic crisis that has afflicted much of Africa for the past several years has jolted the international community into concrete action. Its appalling proportions struck a responsive chord in Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, the media and individuals alike. The subsequent flow of international emergency assistance

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

combined with more favourable weather conditions has given Africa a welcome short-term reprieve, but no guaranteed long-term remedy. The root causes have not changed, and hence any adverse circumstances could obviously precipitate recurrent crises. The devastating impact of the African crisis is a clear manifestation of the fragility and vulnerability of the underlying socio-economic structures: first, the rapid demographic and urbanization growth rates that have outpaced the growth in production; secondly, an exorbitant refugee problem that accounts for more than half of the world's refugees; thirdly, run-away desertification that threatens life-sustaining ecological balances with irreversible breakdown; and, fourthly, human potentials that have yet to be given the opportunity to develop fully.

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

Those are but some of the structural weaknesses that greatly inhibit rather than promote self-sustained development in Africa. Compounding these inherent constraints are external factors, including plunging commodity prices, mounting debt burdens and the heightened insecurity and destabilization imposed by the universally condemned policies of the racist Pretoria régime.

The challenge is indeed formidable. In this regard my delegation whole-heartedly agrees with the conclusions of the thorough analysis of the Organization of African Unity that bold steps and radical measures are necessary to save the African economy from collapse and to ensure a path of self-sustained development. As has always been clearly recognized and repeatedly reaffirmed, the primary responsibility for tackling the African economic crisis and advancing its development resides with the African countries themselves. In this undertaking the African countries have not been found wanting. Nor have they lacked the necessary courage both to draw from the hard lessons of the past and to confront the deep-seated structural problems that have persistently afflicted their economies since colonial times. Their efforts, rooted in the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, the Joint Declaration by the Heads of State and Government at Addis Ababa last year and, more recently, the Priority Programme for Economic Recovery in Africa, demonstrate the depth and seriousness of Africa's collective resolve and commitment. These dramatic steps, already initiated, have exacted a tremendous effort on the part of the African countries and thus deserve our strongest support and encouragement.

In this era of interdependence, the problems afflicting Africa are not exclusively the preoccupation of Africa alone, but they are rightly the concerns of mankind as a whole. Such tasks as structural transformations and major adjustments in development priorities cannot be effectively addressed without the continuing support of the entire international community. The positive response of the

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

international community during the critical emergency period in the past few years was unprecedented and nothing short of dramatic. It has indeed helped avert a calamity of far greater proportions. Nevertheless, beyond emergency assistance, there is a vital need for continuing support in order to bolster and complement domestic efforts in seeking lasting solutions to the structural and chronic economic problems of Africa, for such entrenched problems yield but slowly to even the most concerted and unified action.

This special session provides us with a unique opportunity to forge a renewed solidarity between the African continent and the rest of the international community in order jointly to ensure the needed transformations and stimuli for self-reliant and self-sustained African development. In this time of great challenge and opportunity such solidarity is imperative if the goals and objectives of the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery for 1986 to 1990 are to be met. More specifically, if the Programme is to be effectively implemented and its benefits lasting, the continent needs greater levels of financial assistance. In this context, additional international resources for development are obviously required. This session, therefore, should mark a new phase of genuine co-operation based on collective responsibility which is essential for economic progress in this interdependent world.

Undoubtedly, there is also a dire need to improve the international environment. The collapse of commodity prices, increased protectionism and adverse terms of trade, combined with mounting debt burdens and high real interest rates seriously aggravate the crisis. In addition, declining development assistance and severe currency fluctuations coupled with insufficient international scientific and technological co-operation overwhelm all efforts for sustained African development. Thus, to facilitate a lasting resolution of the African crisis, certain global constraints should be redressed. The Integrated Programme for

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

Commodities of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should be diligently pursued and the Common Fund should be made fully operational. Moreover, the official development assistance targets as agreed upon in the international development strategy should be realized while the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries should be fully implemented. Initiatives to reform the international institutions and mechanisms on money and finance for development should be more actively pursued. And it is also crucial that the ongoing international economic negotiations, such as the preparatory process of the New Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the Code of Conduct on the Transfer of Technology, should be successfully concluded.

The special session on the critical economic situation in Africa presents, above all, a challenge to the developing countries to demonstrate the essential role of economic co-operation among developing countries as a unique manifestation of collective self-reliance in international economic relations. It is precisely because of the present international economic crisis that South-South co-operation, within the context of the critical economic situation in Africa, takes on added urgency. Significantly, the non-aligned countries, at the recent Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi, expressed their readiness to participate actively in the special session which would assist in the adoption of concerted and action-oriented measures to deal with the rehabilitation and the medium and long-term development problems in Africa in a comprehensive and integrated manner. In reviewing the progress of the Plan of Action of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to meet the critical economic situation in Africa, the offers of assistance received from various Member States, including Indonesia, was noted. In addition, it was urged that the non-aligned and other developing countries should further extend all possible assistance to meet the identified needs of the African countries in the priority sectors.

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

For its part, within its limited capacities, Indonesia pledges its continued readiness to support the African countries in their valiant efforts to alleviate their economic crisis and to revitalize their development. Last November the President of the Republic of Indonesia, in addressing the 40th Anniversary Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, announced the voluntary contributions of Indonesian farmers in the form of 100,000 tons of unmilled rice to be forwarded to those suffering from hunger, especially in Africa. Now, in view of the urgent need to address the medium and longer-term development problems in Africa, we continue to stand ready to lend our support, in particular through our programmes of technical co-operation among developing countries, especially in the priority sector of agriculture.

(Mr. Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia)

In conclusion, as we assemble here in this special session of the General Assembly to meet the dual challenge of economic survival and development in Africa, there are certain basic elements we cannot afford to discount. First, if the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery is to be firmly underwritten by the international community, full respect for the sovereign and inalienable rights of the African people to determine their own political, social and economic systems should be observed. Secondly, while the price of delay in the Programme's implementation could be tragic, the risks of failure to support it would be catastrophic.

That being said, it is imperative that the special session adopt action-oriented and concerted measures in support of the African efforts for economic rehabilitation and medium- and long-term development. We hope and trust that our common endeavours will help put Africa back on a solid path towards self-reliant and sustained development and towards prosperity rooted in an economy freed from the shackles of dependency and alien domination.

Mr. PIRES de MIRANDA (Portugal): I should like to reaffirm, on behalf of the Portuguese Government and on my own behalf, our grateful support for the decision to convene this special session. We support it because it reflects the willingness of both developed and developing countries to combine their efforts in a harmonious way. This is the first time that we have been given the opportunity of discussing the economic situation of Africa as a whole. We support this initiative, which takes place within the framework of the United Nations, in spite of all the difficulties confronting it. This is the role of the Organization as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

Nobody has any doubt that the current economic situation in Africa is critical. For many different countries, that is an alarming situation inasmuch as it evidences a lack of the most elementary living conditions. The underlying

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

causes of this dramatic situation are well known: first, an inability to overcome the effects of adverse climatic conditions, which has a negative effect on agriculture and food crops; secondly, a lack of productive investment and skilled labour; thirdly, agriculture predominantly based on one single crop, and a deterioration in the terms of trade; fourthly, inadequate use of resources and insufficient infrastructures in fields such as transportation, storage, preservation and processing of products; fifthly, a worsening of the foreign debt situation; and sixthly, and finally, the inevitable reliance on international assistance with financial constraints.

To those negative elements, mainly economic in nature, we should add several others of a different character which aggravate the already not encouraging social and economic indicators of many regions. Even worse, these additional factors undercut the ongoing effort to improve the situation. I have in mind, in particular, the armed conflicts that have been afflicting many African countries. Indeed, many regions in Africa - particularly southern Africa - do not yet have the peaceful conditions necessary to enable them to concentrate on the immense tasks of development and progress. Acts of violence which took place recently against the integrity of sovereign nations, with total disregard for the most elementary principles of international law, only contribute to the escalation of violence, thus causing immense suffering to the people involved.

Moreover, a political environment that does not permit individual initiative for the promotion of economic development is a serious obstacle to the progress of all countries. And very often this is the result of conflicts that unfortunately still prevail in different forms in many parts of Africa. Political freedom is, indeed, closely associated with economic freedom. Therefore, individual rights and freedoms cannot be disregarded when trying to achieve increased economic development.

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

The convening of this special session is in itself encouraging and positive; it reflects a deeper and more generalized international awareness of the economic problems that concern Africa.

In our modern world, no country, region or continent can live in isolation, whether it be cultural, political or economic. We are all involved, as all problems have an international dimension, both in their causes and in their effects. Thus, international assistance to Africa is without doubt an important issue. It is of the utmost urgency to seek more efficiency - particularly through better co-ordination both at the national level and between donor countries and those receiving assistance - so that such assistance can become an effective element in improving the living conditions of inhabitants and increasing the possibilities for autonomous development in the future.

The Portuguese Government believes that even more important than international assistance is the establishment of equitable conditions of international trade. We are convinced that the wave of protectionism that has been growing in the last few years is an extremely serious threat to the prosperity of developing countries; furthermore it is, in our view, a short-sighted policy that will affect the long-term interests of the very countries that resort to such protectionist practices.

At the international level, it should be borne in mind that private foreign investment can be an important element of progress. It is a fact that the foreign investor aims at obtaining a profit. But this legitimate aim can go hand in hand with the interests of the countries where the investment takes place. This will enable those countries to have access to the capital invested without the inherent costs of debt service, and, at the same time, the country will benefit from new technology - including management - and export markets. Good foreign

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

management provides new methods and techniques unknown to certain economies. It is of the utmost importance that Governments recognize these advantages and be willing to provide adequate guarantees of stability and fair treatment to private foreign capital.

The international dimension of the problem of economic development in Africa - as in any part of the world - should not overshadow the fact that the development of these countries depends first and foremost upon the efforts, the determination and the abilities that the populations and Governments of such countries put into their own development.

The question of the usefulness of international assistance, to which I have referred, is closely related to what I have just said: indeed, if adequate national policies and structural adjustments are not carried out, international assistance will be of little use. Past experience in this field gives us a clear indication, and we should try to learn from previous setbacks.

The underlying message is indeed clear: whatever the significance of the action by the international community - and we believe it is important - the key to the solution of the social-economic problems afflicting Africa today will always lie in the hands of the African people, both in regard to their domestic policies and in regard to interregional co-operation.

In that context, the Portuguese Government welcomes the realism shown by the African countries in formulating the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. We believe that this document contains a clear diagnosis of the ills that place constraints on the economies of several African nations and reflects a strong and decisive will to undertake structural reforms in order to achieve self-sustained development.

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

Indeed, the most important items referred to in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery - namely, agriculture, trade, human resources, rationalization of economic policies and inter-African co-operation - are dealt with with pragmatism, as is evident in the five priority areas I have mentioned, indicating reasonable targets of collective social and economic progress.

Food security is an indispensable element of the successful launching of any programme for development. Of equal importance is the struggle against the desertification and soil erosion which have plagued large regions of Africa, the eradication of which will be possible on a long-term basis only provided joint and co-ordinated efforts are carried out.

I should therefore like to praise the efforts under way towards creating efficient plans of economic co-operation among African countries, such as those of the African Bank for Development and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Portugal has been giving support to the latter to enable it to achieve its aim of ensuring that Africa achieves a higher level of economic self-sufficiency through a better and more co-ordinated use of available resources.

Co-operation between Portugal and the African countries, that is, with those that use Portuguese as their official language, has developed in accordance with the general principles I have outlined.

At the governmental level, the relationship between Portugal and the African countries has been based consistently on our policy of respect for the principle of the sovereignty of States and on the understanding that only measures of real interest to the population should be given consideration. Furthermore, we believe that it would be preferable for the efforts of the Portuguese Government to be concentrated on basic sectors such as health, education and professional training, leaving to the free initiative of the private sector other types of activities. In

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

our opinion, a strong and long-lasting relationship between peoples and countries cannot be created without the active participation of private enterprise.

Portugal has been paying particular attention to supporting agriculture and related activities, as well as to infrastructures in transportation and port facilities in African countries. In the area of technical assistance, our efforts have been oriented towards sending special teams to deal with the solution of problems relating to phyto-sanitation and public administration. Equally important are the programmes in the fields of professional training and support for the health and education sectors. As a result of that policy, approximately 1,500 Africans have been trained every year in Portugal and in their own countries.

In spite of our limited resources, significant efforts have been made in the financial area, both through granting loans on highly concessional terms, with State guarantees of an estimated amount of \$300 million, and through consolidation of the debt in very favourable terms. Additionally, \$180 million of debt is at present being consolidated.

Further, Portugal has contributed to the relaunching of small and medium-size African industries geared to meet the internal needs of the population. We have also stimulated the participation of Portuguese businessmen in the development of African countries, mainly Portuguese-speaking ones. In this context, I should like to emphasize that the private sector must play a decisive role in the economic development of Africa.

The integration of Portugal in the European Economic Community will certainly lead to a reinforcement of the participation of the Community in the programmes for economic development in Africa, within the framework of both the Lomé Convention and the agreements signed with the Mediterranean countries.

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

We endorse the proposals and suggestions made here by the Minister of Development Co-operation of the Netherlands on behalf of the Community, and we shall waste no time in translating them into concrete action.

Africa has embarked upon an unprecedented effort to tackle the development problems afflicting the continent. It is now the duty of the international community to respond generously to the appeal that has been made on its behalf by President Abdou Diouf by providing the means necessary to ensure that the reforms already accomplished or under way come to a successful conclusion, in particular regarding the well-being of the populations.

The dramatic situation that prevails in most of the African continent demands such action, as do the historical past of Portugal and the bonds arising from the common heritage, language and cultural values that so intimately link the Portuguese people to an important part of Africa.

I am convinced that the strong determination of the African peoples and their leaders to shape a new destiny for Africa will enable it to become more self-sufficient and viable, thus laying the basis for a more prosperous and secure future for coming generations.

Portugal will not fail to contribute, within the limits of its possibilities, to the attainment of that goal.

Mrs. de ALURRALDE (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a particular pleasure for me to speak in my capacity as special envoy of my Government at this special session of the General Assembly convened to consider the critical economic situation in Africa.

At the outset I should like to congratulate the President on his election and say how pleased I am that the conduct of the proceedings at this special session is in such good hands.

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

The statement this morning by the Head of State of Senegal on behalf of the member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) described clearly the objectives of this special session.

The countries of Africa are proposing a radical change in their production and consumption targets and an economic and social structural transformation which will make possible more rapid growth and development in the next five years.

We cannot but express our admiration for the determination and honesty with which the African continent is confronting the critical economic situation that its countries are experiencing.

We know from our own experience and that of the sister republics of Latin America, which we experience as if it were our own, the difficulties inherent in the development process and its complex course of achievements and failures. We are also aware of the existence of a series of external conditions that are beyond our control and whose impact on this process can act either as a brake or as a dynamizing factor.*

* Mr. Agius (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

The developing countries concur with the essence of the proposals put forth by the African countries because we see in that continent the sharpest reflection of the common problems afflicting us all: growing instability in the cycles of the international economy, restricted growth in international trade and its barely perceptible impact on the majority of our economies, deterioration of the terms of trade, growing protectionism by the developed countries, instability of and fall in the prices of raw materials and disproportionate burden of external debt aggravated by high real interest rates. Thus the African countries, like so many others in Latin America and Asia, find themselves obliged to export, in spite of their poverty, huge amounts of capital, sums that are deflected from satisfying the basic needs of their peoples and their efforts to relaunch their own development.

It is in the light of this series of external negative factors that we must assess the challenge development of the African continent represents.

This is the first time the General Assembly is holding a special session to consider the economic problems of a given regional area. This compels us to think about the nature of our task, about the apparently rigid standards governing the broad lines of the world economy to the detriment of the weakest. For there are no countries, there are no regions, that are intrinsically poor. Like wealth, poverty is an historic phenomenon and hence it is reversible. Neither does the past dictate nor geography compel. It is man's intelligence, his will to work and the strength of his commitment that build the present and design the future. No inventory of material goods has any meaning without reference to the human society that makes use of it. There is no lack in the southern countries - there is certainly no lack in Africa - of intellectual, moral and material resources to undertake this task and discharge it successfully. That is not what we lack.

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

Economics is a science whose achievements are in the final analysis measured in relation to the concrete benefits deriving from its proper implementation. If it is not imbued with a generous concept of life, its achievement will at best be precarious, for the economic equation cannot be complete without reference to the ethical order and economic justice. That is what the President of the Argentine Republic, Dr. Raul Alfonsin, pointed out in his posthumous tribute to Dr. Raul Prebisch, whose presence in international bodies where problems of developing countries are discussed will be sorely missed.

This is not a case of avariciously distributing scarce resources. The rich will not become less rich as the poor become less poor; or at least that is not what should occur. What is necessary is to produce more, to make more judicious choices better and to act freely and deliberately in keeping with the common objectives of mutual advantage. In the final analysis, one must do the right thing and work with an eye to the kind of coexistence that will meet the material and moral requirements of our times.

The last decade of a century of mind-boggling technological progress is nearing, so let us take stock. To what course is man's talent being put? What good use has been made of man's prodigious powers? If the benefits of progress are not widely felt, if the asymmetry development is made more acute, what kind of future will we bequeath to coming generations?

I shall again refer to the words of Dr. Alfonsin in his address to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth regular session:

"After a review of history, no one should doubt that civilizations live and thrive when they are based upon moral premises; on the contrary, their extinction systematically stems from ethical confusion.

"I also believe that the fact that the world order is increasingly defined by the arms race and financial greed is an ethical confusion.

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

"Were these motivations to persist, there should be no well-being for the majority of our countries. It is also useful to recall that what affects the South will sooner or later affect the welfare of the more advanced countries."

(A/39/PV.5, p. 17-20)

That is the political philosophy of the Argentine Government; it is the pillar against racial discrimination and disregard for the territorial integrity of States. Hence, in light of the most recent acts of aggression perpetrated by the South African Government against the territories of Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Argentine Government on 22 May broke diplomatic relations on 22 May with the Republic of South Africa.

That measure, which is in keeping with our firm condemnation and repudiation of apartheid, is also an expression of solidarity with the friendly nations of southern Africa.

My country has sought to cement relations with Africa in all areas. We maintain diplomatic relations with the majority of countries on that continent, through 14 diplomatic missions. Our relations with African countries extend to joint work at the United Nations as well as within the sphere of co-operation among developing countries. With the establishment of a democratic Government, these relations - which had already been strengthened over time - are becoming even stronger and today cover a broad range of activities. They are nourished by an affinity of attitudes and shared criteria on the difficulties affecting developing countries that need to make progress and at the same time preserve their cultural identity, to defend their political and economic independence and to demonstrate active regional and international solidarity.

The African countries have put forward their priorities for development in the document submitted by the Organization of African Unity at this special session. Among them one can note the crucial importance which, without prejudice to

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

emergency situations, is being attached to food and agriculture. Argentina, an exporter of agricultural products and livestock, agrees with the need to maintain increased productivity in the agricultural sector. We also concur with the idea of focusing on development policies that recognize the necessary link between agriculture, industry and services related to this sector, since, as the document itself indicates, only by means of an integral approach will it be possible to bring to all sectors of the population, even the most dispossessed, the benefits flowing from increased productivity in the agricultural sector.

We are convinced that co-operation among developing countries can make an important contribution to achieving the proposals contained in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. This conviction is bolstered by the experience we have acquired in programmes and projects that have already been or are being implemented - to which I shall refer in specific terms.

First, I should like to indicate that our country supports the machinery for economic co-operation established on the African continent. Approximately a year ago, on 2 July 1985, we joined the African Development Bank as a non-regional member and we have since participated in the African Development Fund.

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

Moreover, the Argentine Government has undertaken activities or signed trade or financial agreements with 19 African countries and has entered into agreements on scientific, technical or cultural co-operation with 10 other countries of the continent.

Similarly, lines of credit amounting to approximately \$200 million have either been granted or offered or are under negotiation with 14 African countries.

The Central Bank of the Republic of Argentina has established facilities for the development of fisheries by means of the transfer of technology. They are being used by the countries of the African Atlantic Basin.

Through the National Institute for Agricultural and Livestock Technology and other official bodies, my Government is examining and studying various measures of financing, assistance and technical advice as part of projects related to the production and health of livestock, management and improvement of grazing land, and infrastructure for storage of agricultural supplies and products.

Various private Argentine enterprises have evinced interest in contributing to various African projects dealing with infrastructure, including engineering projects for the construction of highways, bridges, dwellings, schools and hospitals.

Moreover, we have successfully concluded a programme of technical co-operation in the agricultural sector in which technical experts from 14 African countries have participated. Recently, in Corrientes Province, there was a similar experiment with specialists from one country of the region. Similarly, an offer has been made to various African countries to study and research crops and seeds.

A recently-concluded technical and economic co-operation mission explored and established ways and means of co-operation with various countries on the African continent and with the countries members of the Co-ordinating Conference for the

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

Development of Southern Africa. Areas for co-operation include irrigation projects, production and processing of milk, joint agricultural and livestock projects, rehabilitation of arid soil, creation of health centres, development of leather industry, and consideration of ecological problems relating to lake regions.

Reiterating the importance that we attach to technical co-operation among developing countries, we can say that we have used resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) allocated to our country to finance missions to some of the Sub-Saharan region countries for the purpose of studying livestock development and diseases. We have also considered the establishment of refrigeration plants.

With regard to the specific problem of refugees, at the last international conference on assistance to refugees in Africa my country announced its intention to participate in various projects.

With reference to food, Argentina has reinforced its commitment to the World Food Programme (WFP). Under that Programme my Government recently shipped to Africa more than 10,050 metric tons of wheat flour, equivalent to 15,000 tons of that cereal. This month an additional 5,000 tons will be shipped. Similarly, next June we shall send 3,000 tons of corn to the region.

But economic co-operation among developing countries has limits which derive from the very difficulties that those countries are confronting.

Our country believes in multilateral co-operation instruments and, despite the serious economic situation that we are experiencing, we are trying to participate actively in the United Nations system of co-operation. Our recent contribution to the World Food Programme (WFP) was the second largest among those coming from developing countries. Similarly, our country's participation in the seventh replenishment of the International Development Agency was the fifth largest

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

contribution among the 10 developing contributor countries. Our contribution to the United Nations Development Programme has made our country a net contributor to that Programme. Finally, our country has contributed to the International Fund for Agricultural Development from its establishment.

The aforementioned is merely a narration of what my country, afflicted by the burden of our external debt and committed to streamlining our own economy consistent with the requirements of demanding austerity, has been able and intends to do.

Argentina's co-operation with African countries is, as should be the case of co-operation among developing countries, of mutual benefit, marked by a sense of justice, solidarity and the overriding desire to contribute practically to the implementation of decisions adopted by the Group of 77. But there can be no doubt that that is not enough. It is necessary for those who can do more to understand that. The debts of justice are debts of honour. However high the price, it can never exceed the value set by one's own conscience.

What Africa is calling for and needs and what all the peoples advocating a new international economic order are calling for is an orderly transformation of relations between an increasingly impoverished South and those who are in a better position to modify the rigid conditions that are delaying our progress.

After two decades of development, history seems to have come to a standstill. It is time to begin again.

For the determination and courage with which the African continent has confronted the deficiencies of its own development to be successful, a co-ordinated effort by the international community is necessary: a commitment on the part of the industrialized countries to provide resources to defray current financial

(Mrs. de Alurralde, Argentina)

shortfalls, greater co-operation among developing countries, and reinforcement of multilateral machinery for co-operation.

The interdependence of the contemporary world does not allow for a sick Africa. International economic relations cannot tolerate inequality and underdevelopment and must be remodelled to give rise to a more just and equitable international economic order.

Mr. ELLEMANN-JENSEN (Denmark): First of all, I should like to congratulate Ambassador de Piniés on his election as President of this special session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his able leadership this session will be brought to a successful conclusion, and he can count on the full support of the Danish delegation in carrying out his task.

This special session on the critical economic situation in Africa takes place at a crucial time. After an unprecedented decline during the first half of this decade some encouraging elements have appeared on the African horizon. This situation has created new hope - hope which can be fulfilled only if the brighter prospects are taken as a challenge: by African countries, by donor countries and by multilateral organizations, individually and collectively.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

We are gathered here not just in order to phrase the political intentions to act, but to convert intentions into dynamic action. This is the real task which confronts the General Assembly.

What are the encouraging factors? The drought which has devastated large areas and brought untold suffering to millions of people has been replaced by rainfall and improved harvests in many places. Oil prices have declined, substantially reducing the import bill of oil-importing countries. The drop in the value of the dollar and interest rates has helped ease the debt-service burden, and the prices of some commodities of significance to African countries have started to rise again.

With the recession behind them, industrial countries are now in a position to meet this challenge. No longer can they justify a lack of support for Africa on domestic economic problems.

Most important, however, is the mutual understanding of donors and African countries of the nature and complexity of the problems confronting the continent and the measures required to break the vicious circle of decline and to relaunch Africa on a path of economic and social progress. I sense that the mutual understanding is indeed spreading. For all these reasons, now is the time to transform this understanding into urgent and innovative action.

The documentation submitted to the Assembly by the African Governments reflects their readiness for new approaches. We appreciate the courage it has taken to make firm commitments to policy reforms and structural adjustment. In this connection we welcome their readiness to intensify the dialogue with the international community in a frank and constructive manner.

Denmark is in general agreement with the priorities established by the African countries in their Priority Programme for Economic Rehabilitation, priorities which

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

in large measure correspond with those prevailing in Danish development co-operation policy.

Agriculture, in particular food production, remains the dominant factor in African economies and must be given the highest priority. In too many African countries the agricultural sector has been neglected. It has suffered from lack of capital. Food prices have been kept down artificially, removing incentives for farmers to increase production. Unrealistically high exchange rates have also worked to the detriment of the production of export crops; and too much government regulation has created unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles.

Radical changes in present policies are required to achieve increased self-reliance in food production. Pricing policies must take account of market conditions. Credit facilities must be made available to the farmer. Exchange rate policies must be realistic. Physical and institutional infrastructures for marketing agricultural output must be improved.

The small farmer is the backbone of food production in Africa. She must be the focal point of agricultural policies. Yes, I said she, not he, for in many areas of Africa women are responsible for more than half - in some cases up to 80 per cent - of a country's food production. No agricultural policy can be effective without taking this fact into account. The role of women must be enhanced, not just as a matter of equality and social justice but also as an indispensable prerequisite for economic development. Recognizing the paramount importance of the agricultural sector in most African countries, the industrial and manufacturing sectors should especially cater to the needs of agriculture through the production of input and the processing of output.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Two areas dealt with in the documentation give rise to problems of a global and far-reaching nature. I am referring to the environment, in particular desertification, afforestation and soil erosion. Equally important and interrelated is the problem of the alarmingly rapid population growth. Solutions to these problems require new concepts and changes in social attitudes. Results will only materialize in a longer time perspective. But all the more, the start must be made today.

The formulation of the priorities set out in the Priority Programme is an important step, but it is only the first step if African countries are to achieve sustained economic growth. It must be followed by implementation of the priorities to which the Governments of Africa have committed themselves. It will require many hard and painful decisions. A number of countries have already taken bold steps forward, and rewards are in some cases beginning to show. This should encourage others to follow suit.

At the same time it must be emphasized that the adjustment process can only be successful if it is fully supported by substantive measures undertaken by the international community. Denmark stands ready, today as in the past, to make its contribution. Africa has long held an important place in our development co-operation programme. In fact two thirds of Denmark's present assistance already goes to African countries. And as we plan to increase our total development aid considerably in the coming years - from the present 0.82 per cent of our gross national product to 1 per cent of our gross national product in 1992 - this implies a substantial increase in the resources available from Denmark for Africa.

During the recent crisis substantial assistance has been provided as disaster relief. We are of the firm belief, however, that emergency aid should not be given at the expense of longer-term assistance. We see this special session as an

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

important opportunity to ensure that the readiness of donors to bring relief to the suffering millions in Africa will now be transformed into a commitment to support rehabilitation and economic growth on the continent.

All assessments of the situation in African countries conclude that there is a substantial gap between the recognized needs and the availability of external resources. This gap must be filled. If all donors were to honour the commitments they made on the adoption of the international development strategy and the Substantial New Programme of Action for the least developed countries, a giant step forward would be taken in filling the gap. I urge them to do so. And I do so against the background of Denmark's own commitment to increase our development assistance to 1 per cent of our gross national product in 1992.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

No doubt all African countries can point to substantial difficulties facing them, but the international community must give the highest priority to supporting the poorest among them, through both bilateral and multilateral channels. In the context of increasing assistance to low-income countries in Africa, the eighth International Development Association (IDA) replenishment should be at a level of at least \$12 billion. We also call for substantial contributions to the Special Programme for Africa of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The debt burden is weighing heavily on the backs of African countries. For many countries that burden has become unbearable. A weak economy in general and a narrow resource base linked to a single primary commodity or a few such commodities make improvements in the balance-of-payments situation almost impossible. Measures to relieve the debt burden are therefore indispensable. But, since the debt burden varies significantly in both size and composition, any relief measure must be tailored to the concrete circumstances in each individual debtor country.

Since 1979 Denmark has responded positively to a large number of requests for debt relief from African countries. Cancellation of official development assistance debt in the amount of 700 million Danish kroner has been provided to 11 least developed countries and other low-income countries.

In response to a request from Tanzania, I have submitted a proposal to the Finance Committee of the Danish Parliament for cancellation of all outstanding official development assistance debt by Tanzania to Denmark. That amounts to approximately \$83 million. The Committee will act on my proposal tomorrow.

I have made that proposal in the light of the efforts made by Tanzania to work out a reform programme that will make an agreement with the International Monetary Fund possible. My country has for a long time been urging Tanzania to come to terms with the Fund. We hope that an agreement will be forthcoming in the near future.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Denmark remains prepared to deal favourably with requests from least developed countries in Africa for cancellation of official development assistance debt. For other low-income countries in Africa we remain ready to consider debt-relief measures, including total or partial cancellation of official development assistance debt, on the basis of concrete assessment of each individual case.

The very theme of this special session is the strongest possible evidence that problems can no longer be solved at the national level but require cross-border co-operation. African countries have recognized the usefulness and even necessity of regional co-operation. Their efforts in that field warrant our support.

For Denmark, co-operation with the countries of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) region has been steadily increasing. Together with other Nordic countries we have recently initiated a new approach to co-operation between the two regions. In January this year a joint declaration on expanded economic co-operation was signed by the Nordic and SADCC countries. It represents a mutual determination to go beyond the traditional donor-recipient relationship and seek new avenues of co-operation between our two regions.

A basic idea is to intensify relations on a wide spectrum of activities in trade, joint ventures, investments, commodities and technology transfers, as well as in cultural co-operation, making use of a combination of various resources.

This new Nordic relationship with SADCC should, of course, also be seen in a political context. We recognize that SADCC has developed their own co-operation both in response to and in spite of severe difficulties. Not only do its member countries suffer from the same economic problems as the rest of Africa, but, in addition, they are saddled with the burden of proximity to South Africa. Acts of economic destabilization against its neighbours are a continuous feature of the policies of the South African Government, and just a week ago we saw yet another

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

armed attack on three SADC countries, resulting in death and injury. We unequivocally condemn that aggression.

I have focused on the encouraging elements in today's situation as well as on the enormous difficulties that exist and will exist for years to come. I believe a small flame of optimism can be seen, but it is a flickering flame. It is our mutual responsibility to shield and develop that flame so that it may shine with increasing intensity and gradually disperse the shadows of decline and suffering which for so long have been cast over Africa. It is no easy task, and there are no quick solutions. Marginally improved policy performance or slightly increased development assistance will not suffice. We must meet the challenge head on.

Mr. TINDEMANS (Belgium) (interpretation from French): A country such as Belgium, whose concern with regard to Africa is based on a long tradition and the many links forged by history, cannot remain indifferent to the range of problems affecting the African continent.

Once again we are gathered here to examine, in a spirit of solidarity, the difficulties which Africa has to face.

In 1984, the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II), met in Geneva. I was touched by the confidence shown in me when I had the honour of being elected President of that Conference, particularly since ICARA II constituted a very important step towards increasing international solidarity with Africa.

Today, we have to go beyond emergency relief measures to the deeper roots of the problem. We must define a set of priority measures to promote rehabilitation and development and to ensure the longer-term future of the African continent. We must all think about the causes of the gradual deterioration of the economic and social situation in Africa in order to set in motion policies that will directly address those causes.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

It is satisfying to note that the endeavours in this field are shared. On the one hand the African countries are fully aware of the need to initiate the adjustment processes required by the structural nature of their economic difficulties. They have decided to shoulder their responsibilities in this field and they deserve our congratulations. On the other hand the developed countries, including Belgium, which are deeply concerned about the welfare of African peoples, are also gradually adjusting their co-operation policies.

Increasingly, views on the objectives to be achieved are converging. A broad consensus exists nowadays on the priority sectors for the rehabilitation and development of the African continent. Obviously, agriculture and integrated rural development must be promoted, but there is a parallel need to combat desertification, to develop human resources and to maximize available financial resources through optimum management and co-ordination. In short, development has to become more human and better adapted to local situations and needs.

In the field of agriculture, all development action should include the definition of a pricing policy, which would stimulate farmers by means of proper remuneration within the framework of the market. This should be complemented by the promotion, as a matter of priority, of food crops which would benefit the population as a whole and by an appropriate commercialization system. This implies, in turn, the existence of an adequate material and human infrastructure. It is equally important that the development of agriculture be accompanied and supported by integrated rural development. It is time to slow down the movement of rural populations to the cities and to combat the social and economic problems resulting therefrom.

On the other hand, the fight against drought and deforestation makes it more

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

than ever necessary to take large-scale action at the national, regional and international levels. This should include both direct measures, such as reforestation, and indirect measures, which would depend on the development of sources of energy other than wood and on the social and economic education of rural populations.

Human resources development also play a key role. African Governments would benefit greatly from adopting their education and training systems, to the needs of their societies. Given the essential role of women in African societies, in particular in rural areas, these efforts in the sphere of education and training should be directed particularly towards drawing the maximum benefit from their contribution to economic development, while ensuring respect for their dignity.

Finally, we cannot but agree with the Economic Commission for Africa on the link which must necessarily exist between the volume of financial resources available and the quality of management of development programmes. The best possible use must be made of existing resources by improving the management and co-ordination of development programmes.

We recognize that a lot remains to be done, by both North and South, to avoid administrative errors, negligence, duplication and sterile competition. We should, at the same time, harmonize existing bilateral and multilateral co-operation procedures, and take fully into account the absorptive capacities of recipient countries. Multilateral mechanisms exist to fill this triple role; it would be preferable to make better use of them rather than to create new ones.

In my opinion, these should be the main features of a medium-term programme for African development. I should like to renew here the solemn commitment of the Belgian Government to pursue its policy of co-operation with Africa and to consider strengthening this policy by all the means available.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Belgium has experience of Africa. This is an advantage in the present general consideration of the African situation.

The major part of Belgian bilateral assistance has always been directed towards Africa. In recent years more than 70 per cent of our bilateral assistance has gone to that continent. Our assistance to the poorest countries has always been based on grants. In addition, Belgian funds are channelled through multilateral bodies of the United Nations system, the European Development Fund or the African Development Bank.

Furthermore, in October 1983 the Belgian Parliament passed a law establishing a survival fund for the third world to assist people threatened by hunger, malnutrition and underdevelopment. This Fund, which has financial resources of 10 billion Belgian francs, that is approximately \$200 million in addition to the bilateral official development assistance given by Belgium, has enabled us so far to take significant action in four African countries: Kenya, Uganda, Somalia and Ethiopia. This action has been carried out in co-operation with the competent United Nations bodies and the Governments concerned.

For a number of years now Belgium has achieved the target of allotting 0.15 per cent of its gross national product to official development assistance to the least developed countries and it is making every effort to achieve the aim of 0.7 per cent for total official development assistance. My country will take part in the eighth replenishment of International Development Association (IDA) funds, of which sub-Saharan Africa will be one of the main beneficiaries.

I have already stated that Belgium has decided, in consultation with recipient countries, to concentrate its future bilateral assistance on a number of priority areas. These priorities are, essentially, agricultural development, integrated rural development, infrastructure and directly productive investment.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

On the other hand, we are convinced of the danger inherent in the external indebtedness of the African countries. This problem is so serious that the burden of debt servicing often seems out of all proportion to the economic potential of the countries concerned. In certain cases, financial flows have even become globally negative.

Belgium participates actively and with an open mind in negotiations aimed at alleviating the debt of those countries on a case-by-case basis. We wish to take into account all the elements of the situation, including the adjustment policies pursued by certain countries to make the management of their development more efficient.

Furthermore, and in conformity with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) resolution on retroactive adjustment of the conditions of assistance, we have adjusted the methods of reimbursement of State-to-State loans extended to the least developed countries.

Nevertheless, taking into account the seriousness of the debt problem in general, I remain convinced that new approaches will have to be sought within the framework of the competent international bodies.

I wonder if, instead of converting public debt into grants, which is a mere artifice without merit for the longer term, the approach could not be based on the possibility, which has existed in Belgium since 1983, of earmarking reimbursements of State loans for a fund through which it would be possible to extend new loans. I think that such a system would indeed be of great assistance to developing countries.

One could also, in certain cases, envisage the possibility of certain official development assistance debts being reimbursed in local currency. These amounts

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

could then be used to defray local administrative costs of development projects or to pay co-operation personnel in local currency.

In any event, one must be taken to ensure that no African country which has adopted appropriate adjustment measures finds itself, in the final analysis, a net debtor of public financial flows.

Before concluding, I should like to underline the need for Africa to encourage an open attitude to technology and industry.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

I should like to see a great number of small and medium-size enterprises develop, corresponding to the spirit of initiative and the aspirations of the African peoples. I intend to direct an ever greater part of our co-operation towards directly productive sectors, through small and medium-size enterprises. The development of this important economic sector is linked to the technical and technological training of young people - that is, to the development of professional and, especially, technical education. In most cases, middle-level executives are still lacking in African countries. In this field also, Belgium wants to increase its efforts, bearing in mind its own experience.

I have not yet mentioned the non-governmental organizations, which have a unique part to play in the processes of developing an economy on a human scale. Their specific contribution is admirably suited to efficient, decentralized action.

The African countries bear the heavy responsibility of defining for themselves, and carrying out, development strategies that will reduce their vulnerability in the face of economic crises and market fluctuations. On the other hand, the community of industrialized States of all regions, including newly industrialized countries, must unite their efforts to help all the African countries resolve their problems and modernize their societies and their economies. This interdependence and common responsibility must enable us to mobilize the necessary energy to facilitate in Africa the blossoming of prosperous and dynamic societies which also respect African originality.

Mr. WIELAND ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): In the words of our chief, executive, President Alan Garcia, Peru brings to the Assembly its firmest support for, and solidarity with, the initiative of the African countries which has brought us together. He states in the following message:

"At the opening of the special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, I extend to our African brothers Peru's

(Mr. Wieland Alzamora, Peru)

support for, and solidarity with, the exemplary regional action, taken by individual countries and countries acting together in defence of Africa's legitimate interests and aspirations, which has set Africa moving.

"I am confident that the developed world will know how to respond to the effort at rebuilding and construction that Africa is making to achieve its development, by adopting measures to correct the international economic situation, which is today frustrating and suffocating the development capacity of Africa and the other regions of the third world, and will shoulder its responsibilities in this process of rectifying and restructuring world economic relations. A true recovery in the African development process requires not only the eradication of the effects of hunger and desertification, but, above all, the international political will to reverse the ominous trends in the terms of trade, a substantial increase in the value of traditional African exports, a fair settlement of the external debt problem and a positive adjustment of flows of financial resources to the region.

"I reaffirm Peru's support for the claims that this special session of the General Assembly is called upon to consider in order to find a solution to the short-term and structural problems causing the critical economic situation in Africa, which is harming the well-being and progress of the vast majority of mankind in that and other third-world regions."

For the first time in its history, the General Assembly has decided to deal with the economic problems of a single region. That is a reflection of the priority demanded by the gravity of the economic situation in Africa as well as the collapse of international co-operation and the failure of the present world economic system - and its responsible institutions - to face up to the general crisis of the developing countries.

(Mr. Wieland Alzamora, Peru)

There is just one basic problem. Nothing shows that more clearly than the working paper prepared by the Secretary-General for the Preparatory Committee for this special session, which indicates that there are three adverse external factors - the deterioration in the terms of trade, protectionism and the rise in interest rates. That caused the countries of sub-Saharan Africa the loss of \$15 billion between 1980 and 1985, exactly equivalent to the larger part of the external debt that those countries had to contract in the same period. That is a revealing coincidence, requiring no further comment on the origins of the crisis and the responsibility for it.

It will be understood in the light of that decisive structural problem that the palliatives attempted at the bilateral or multilateral levels, preferential and selective treatment and so-called stabilization systems have not had sufficient effect to check the crisis. Today, with its political dimensions and importance understood, it has been brought before this important world political forum for an attempt to be made, on the basis of the facts, to find a formula combining wisdom, realism, and effectiveness to help solve the African economic crisis and the structural and temporary problems that have caused it, which are rooted in the world system, whose injustices and contradictions we have been trying for so long to correct.

We should emphasize several aspects of preparations for the session that is starting today.

The first is the courageous example of concerted regional action that the joint African initiative efficiently co-ordinated by its own regional institutions, gives other regions of the third world.

Secondly, I would refer to the high political and technical quality of the African documents, whose diagnoses and estimates have been endorsed by the international financial institutions, to the courage and honesty of the

(Mr. Wieland Alzamora, Peru)

self-criticism inherent in them, and to their commitment to put things right and work together.

The third matter is the lack of any result from the negotiations, which have so far been marked by a lack of political will on the part of the international community, to which the African proposals are addressed, and the political need to respond to the African regional initiative and its commitments and shoulder the reciprocal responsibilities that it legitimately calls for.

The fourth matter is the need fully to respect the sovereign right of each State to formulate, implement and administer its own development programmes and projects, in keeping with its national interests and needs.

It is also worth highlighting, because of its moral value and the warning it contains, the grave statement made by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee about the biased distortion of the concept of international aid, which is often aimed at benefiting the donor country and its agricultural, industrial, trade, technological and financial policies, to the eventual detriment of the recipient country and its chances of true development.

(Mr. Wieland Alzamora, Peru)

Particularly courageous, because of their honesty and integrity, are the denunciations of the frequent attempts of donor countries - frequently associated with the elites of the South who have been trained in the North - to impose on recipient countries models and patterns of development divorced from reality and the aspirations of those countries, the final result of which is the destruction of national values and potentials, along with the myth they are attempting to impose. These are decisive in the process of development; they subject those countries to economic and political subordination, the destruction of their potential for food self-sufficiency, dependency upon alien consumer policies and the financial subjugation inherent in the debt accompanying the process.

We must now come to the help of our African brothers. We must re-experience the painful process of international co-operation. We must define the corresponding political responsibilities and try a new, rational, equitable and far-sighted form of universal coexistence. We must remember the errors of the past and, at this particular time, the errors of abundance in the case of the rich and of scarcity in the case of the impoverished. We must remember, so that we do not repeat those errors. We must define the future with vision, generosity and grandeur.

Peru reiterates its conviction of the capacity of peoples for understanding and of their sense of justice and solidarity. We extend the firmest support possible to the joint initiative taken by our African brothers to defend the structural, temporary interests of their development and the autonomy of their national decisions, and we reaffirm our support for the genuine international co-operation the Assembly is called upon to develop.

I should like warmly to commend the moratoriums on debts that have been announced by the Ministers of the Netherlands, Canada and Denmark, which will blaze the path for hope called for by the President of Senegal this morning.

Ms. VETLESEN (Norway): This special session is indeed a historic occasion. It is the first time ever that the United Nations General Assembly has devoted a special session to the economic and social problems of one continent. The present crisis in Africa is one of the greatest and most urgent challenges for the international community and thus amply justifies the special attention of this world body.

Initially I should like to stress the importance of the work done by the Organization of African Unity and its member States. The elaboration of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and the draft United Nations Programme of Action are impressive contributions to the preparations for this special session. My delegation is of the opinion that those documents provide a sound basis for our work.

There is little need for me to repeat the statistics describing the serious and even desperate economic situation of many African countries. It is sufficient to point out that the decline in Africa's per capita output during the 1970s and 1980s will together wipe out all increases in per capita output in the 1960s. As a result low-income Africa is poorer today than it was in the 1960s.

As for the causes of the crisis, we note that there is a convergence of views in the analysis of the document of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the World Bank's recent report on the matter. In both documents it is a basic thesis that the drought years and the current economic crisis have merely accentuated the underlying structural problems.

There is full agreement that these structural problems have been caused by a combination of domestic and external factors. In this context it is encouraging to note the frank way in which the OAU document discusses certain shortcomings of policies pursued by African Governments themselves. It is also satisfactory to note that the reform process has already started.

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

Certainly, external factors have had a negative impact, even to the extent of playing havoc with many African economies.

The general picture I have given should not lead to undue generalization. It goes without saying that the situations of individual countries differ and policies and remedies will therefore have to be adjusted accordingly.

In the African submission to the special session, the highest priority is given to the rehabilitation and development of agriculture and supportive sectors. My delegation fully supports this priority setting. Food self-sufficiency ratios have dropped from almost 100 per cent in the 1960s to the situation of today, in which one out of every five Africans depends on food imports to survive. Through national food strategies the basis should be laid for long-term development leading to self-sufficiency in food for Africa.

As stated in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, the focus of attention must be the peasant small-holder, with special emphasis on female farmers, who play such an important role in food production in many countries. And steps should be taken to enable small-holders effectively to produce both staple food and cash crops for domestic and external markets. Appropriate price incentives are important in this connection, as is pointed out in the OAU document. Low producer prices have in many cases resulted in low production. In other cases the distribution and marketing of crops represents the bottleneck. Increased food production should lead to increased rural employment. This is all the more important in view of the growing problems of urbanization in Africa and the fact that agriculture will for a long time to come have to provide the greatest employment opportunity.

While we agree with the priority given to agriculture, we should not lose sight of the broader structural problems of the African economy. Structural

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

transformation and economic diversification must be a continuous process, and that process should be accelerated.

Development, however, is not a one-dimensional concept linked to economic growth alone. Development must also be considered in a social context. Therefore I should like to emphasize that as much attention should be paid to the distribution of wealth as to the necessity of economic growth. Measures which result in social progress and human development have a multiplier effect which accelerates economic growth in the long-term perspective.

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

We should have liked to see more of an in-depth analysis of the problems raised by the deterioration of the natural environment and the accelerating population growth, which are both posing serious threats to Africa's long-term development. We believe that a new emphasis must be given to efforts aimed at increasing productivity and production on an environmentally sound basis, as well as to appropriate demographic policies.

If we look at the trends of demographic developments in Africa and take the long-term view, I think it is appropriate to express concern when the population growth rate is so much higher than the growth rate in food production. With this background, new importance should be given to the World Population Plan of Action, adopted by the United Nations Conference in Mexico City, as well as the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action, adopted by all African Governments in 1984.

An important factor causing ecological imbalance in many African countries is deforestation, which often transforms productive areas into desert or semi-desert, with a subsequent decrease in productivity. I should like to refer to an old American Indian proverb, which says: "The trees support the sky; destroy them, and disaster follows". It seems that in many areas of the world the truth of this saying has been proved. We should bear in mind that it should never be taken for granted that, when a tree is cut, new seedlings will pop up by themselves. Experience in our country tells us that forests have to be taken care of and maintained well to be productive. We share this experience with many countries with a long tradition in forestry. In my opinion, it would be a very positive step indeed if we could put our experience behind the growing African efforts to turn the tide of dwindling forests in Africa.

The question of taking care of the forests brings me once again to the importance of the full participation of women in the development process. African female farmers are among the first to suffer from the declining productivity of the

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

land as well as the burdensome lack of firewood. They will therefore be among the best motivated to apply remedies, given the necessary support and incentives. New agricultural methods, soil conservation and fuel wood plantation schemes are already mobilizing African women. Such mobilization and participation must be encouraged.

As for the broader role and contribution of women in the development process, this is given some attention in the documentation before us. It cannot be too strongly underlined, however, that large numbers of women remain on the periphery of the economic systems and the decision-making processes of many developing, but of course not only developing, countries. There is thus an urgent need to strengthen the participation of women in all areas of the economy and at all levels of development planning and implementation.

Turning to the implementation of the measures foreseen in the draft programme of action, it is clear that, in addition to the extraordinary efforts that will be required by the African countries themselves, a substantial expansion of support from the rest of the international community will be needed in the years ahead.

Against this background, my delegation strongly believes that one main objective of this special session must be a broad commitment by the collective donor community to mobilize additional external resources for Africa, in particular increased official development assistance to the poorer countries.

Such additional resources could be fully within reach if the donor community met the targets for official development assistance as set out in the International Development Strategy. In the view of my Government, there is an urgent need for donor countries - and especially those with strong economies - to increase their official development assistance effectively and substantially with a view to *attaining as soon as possible the 0.7 and 1 per cent targets.* And the efforts to

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

increase official development assistance should be taken in parallel with measures to improve the quality of that aid.

As stressed in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, the support of the international community should not be limited to the flow of financial resources. Equally important is the need for attempts to remedy Africa's urgent and pressing problems linked to the drastic fall in commodity prices, increasing protectionism and high interest rates. In this context, we welcome the decision to launch the new round of trade negotiations.

I should like for a moment to turn to some of my own country's commitments and policies vis-à-vis African countries. Norway has a long tradition of recognizing the special situation and needs of the poorer and most disadvantaged countries. In this connection, I take pleasure in announcing that my Government is now in the process of taking the necessary steps to convert into grants our one and only outstanding official development assistance loan to sub-Saharan Africa, that is, to Tanzania.

For several years our total aid disbursements have been around 1 per cent of our gross national product, and our disbursements to the least developed countries amount to 0.32 per cent. This is basically given in the form of grants and untied aid. Almost half of our official development assistance goes to multilateral organizations, and Norway is thus an important contributor to multilateral aid to Africa. On the other side, our bilateral aid amounts to more than 60 per cent and is channelled to Africa south of the Sahara. This share of our bilateral aid has increased during recent years, and efforts will be made to continue this trend.

Thus, a new five-year plan for assistance to the Sudano-Sahelian region for the period 1986-1990 has been initiated. Furthermore, plans are being worked out for increased support to agricultural and rural development in the main co-operation countries for Norwegian bilateral assistance in eastern and southern Africa.

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

Turning to the southern African region, I should like to state that the Norwegian Government has strongly condemned the latest South African attacks on offices and dwellings of the African National Congress in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. In view of South Africa's flagrant destabilization policies in neighbouring States, new initiatives have recently been taken by Norway and the other Nordic countries vis-à-vis the members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. These initiatives foresee broad economic, commercial and cultural co-operation between the two regions, extending much beyond traditional aid frameworks.

In a broader context, Africa's problems are linked to the global ecological problems. In this connection, I wish to draw attention to the work done by the World Commission on Environment and Development, under the chairmanship of the Norwegian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland. From the very start of its work in 1984, the Commission has emphasized that lack of justice in the world's economic and social order leads to environmental degradation, in particular in developing countries. Much of the same thinking is - and should be - reflected in the documents prepared for this Conference.

In the draft programme of action we have noted that two general principles guide the African thinking on the follow-up: the mechanisms should be simple and operational and should not involve substantial additional expenditure; and emphasis should be placed, as far as possible, on the strengthening of existing institutions rather than the creation of new ones. We fully support this approach, and we have an open mind as to the discussion of possible reforms in the working methods of existing forums.

The task of this special session is a momentous one, and we cannot afford to fail. As stated in the Nordic intervention in the Preparatory Committee, the outcome should contain a pledge by the African Governments to adopt national

(Ms. Vetlesen, Norway)

policies and reforms aiming at correcting current deficiencies and to mobilize more domestic resources to the priority purposes of the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. The donor countries, and the international community at large, should pledge their full and effective support to the African Governments in these efforts. An important overall increase in the external assistance must certainly play a significant role in this context.

My delegation pledges its full support to a successful outcome of this special session.

Mr. HUSSAIN (Maldives): At this historic special session, the General Assembly is for the first time focusing on the needs of a single continent. The main purpose is to draw up a programme of activities to deal, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, with the long-term development problems and obstacles confronted by Africa.

Our decision was to devote this important special session of the General Assembly not only to the immediate crisis in Africa but also to the critical situation of Africa from a global perspective. It is in that spirit that we must seek the solidarity of all countries and the more realistic side of the interdependence of all continents.

We see this special session as part of the process that has evolved during the past two or three years: to focus international thinking and discussions on the nature and causes of and the problems surrounding the African economic and social crisis. Now the international community should look beyond the emergency and supplement the domestic actions taken by the African countries to achieve a long-lasting solution. Our attention has been drawn to the fact that the mere flow of financial resources or addressing ourselves to the disturbing external factors is not sufficient; greater efforts must be expended in restoring Africa's capacity to lay a new foundation for development.

(Mr. Hussain, Maldives)

The root causes of the African situation are to be found in historical factors. Most African States achieved their independence only recently. Deprived of the trained personnel needed for dealing with their administrative responsibilities and economies, the majority of those States were compelled to sacrifice their resources to the achievement of nationhood and their unity. They lack either the capability or the resources to pay adequate attention to economic and social development.

The African crisis has grown to its present proportion because of the effects of successive natural disasters. The rural populations of African nations have little or no choice about exploiting their options to alleviate suffering and hardship. The pressure of the population growth, which is far in excess of what can be sustained by the present rate of economic growth, has also been a factor contributing to the current situation.

The present African crisis is more complex than a matter of just feeding the hungry. The population growth, especially of the rural sectors, has further aggravated the problem. The lack of adequate health facilities and basic educational outlets have adversely contributed to the existing dilemma. We therefore believe that the decision taken by the African nations to adhere to the Lagos Plan of Action, with the necessary precisions and adjustments, will have far-reaching results.

We are encouraged by the strong commitment expressed by African Governments, in this vital battle for survival and development. There is indeed full recognition of the necessity unsparingly to engage and utilize all available resources at home. Therefore, it is our fervent hope that the aim of international co-operation and assistance will be to complement the arduous task which the African nations have undertaken to accomplish in the future. We, the international community, sharing in the efforts of African development, must endeavour to make the

(Mr. Hussain, Maldives)

painful responsibility much easier, by adding greater momentum towards preventing more human suffering, which has already been too prolonged. We must not permit any room for doubt in the conviction of the African nations that, given the necessary support from the international community, they have the inherent capacity to bring about change in order to function as an effective partner in the multilateral economic structure.

It is gratifying to note that in recent years a new spirit has emerged in the leadership of many African nations. Having recognized their past errors, they have embarked upon new strategies to put aside failed policies and embrace more pragmatic new approaches. Most importantly, some have declared their acceptance of the responsibility for economic and social change, which rests with Africans themselves. Their desire to deal with this serious problem with fresh minds has strengthened their ideology.

(Mr. Hussain, Maldives)

We would be failing in our duty to address this complex problem if we ignored some of the undeniable realities. Most African countries, in spite of all the efforts made over the period of a quarter of a century since independence, still rely heavily on the export of a limited variety of primary products. Although some countries have done better than others, food production has been on the decline. We witnessed this in the poorest countries, where the gross domestic product per capita fell throughout the 1970s. Therefore, the task before us cannot be considered as one that has to deal merely with rehabilitation and restoration of the situation existing prior to the current emergency.

One disturbing factor that we have observed is the trend of constant and increasingly frequent recurrence of the difficulties, driving the continent of Africa into a morass of underdevelopment. This point is further demonstrated by that continent's link to the world economy remaining largely based on the inherited colonial structure. The main exports being still primary commodities, African countries are especially vulnerable to the violent changes in international markets.

We in the Maldives believe that the world economic order needs to be redefined and restructured to create more favourable conditions in which the developed, developing and underdeveloped countries can all participate effectively, in a climate of reduced suspicion. We are convinced that nothing less than clearly defined steps and radical measures are needed to bring about such a change. In order to prevent the collapse of African economies and guarantee the means for fundamental restructuring and the evolution of a viable policy, a new approach to assistance by the international community is required.

We are of the opinion that long-term endeavours encompassing structural transformation must be begun urgently and immediately. A programme of action with long-term remedies must also show change and positive results in the near future to

(Mr. Hussain, Maldives)

guarantee sustained vigilance and generate interest. It is fundamentally important that in any programme of action for African recovery and development the highest priority is given to the rehabilitation and development of the agricultural sector. All such programmes must receive the necessary domestic support for effective implementation.

The much-needed external resources will not, we believe, by themselves produce progress, and there is sufficient experience to show that inappropriate assistance leads only to failure. Further, it is the experience of most African countries that grappling with unfavourable terms of trade and rising debt-servicing costs has brought about a devastating shortage of foreign exchange and crippled the efforts to increase their import capacity in order to make rehabilitation more effective.

We are heartened by the enormous response of the international community through the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental bodies to harness support and channel resources. The fund-raising events organized throughout the world through exploitation of the mass media networks have brought additional relief to those with the most urgent needs. In addition, the activities which have been outlined by United Nations organizations and agencies, promise both short-term and long-term impact on the situation. Some of those programmes are aimed at dealing with such fundamental areas of development as improvement of the basic level of education and the provision of management and administrative skills.

We are confident that the conclusions of this important special session of the General Assembly will clearly outline the challenging task before the international community. It is our sincere hope and desire that a true sense of partnership in assistance and development will emerge to alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters living in the nations of Africa. World awareness has been generated by the convening of this session of the General Assembly and by the numerous international activities which have taken place during the last two years, and the heart of man has been touched and his sympathy aroused.

Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand): My delegation would like, at the outset, to join previous speakers in extending its warmest congratulations to the President on his unanimous election to preside over this historic gathering. We are confident that, under his wise and experienced guidance and leadership, the proceedings of this special session will yield constructive and fruitful results.

It was indeed a privilege to hear the important and thought-provoking statement of Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, which served to clarify the overall critical situation on the African continent and its impact on humanity.

My delegation regards the convening of the special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa as most important and necessary, in view of the urgency and gravity of the multi-faceted problem facing the entire continent.

The fact that the international community adopted by consensus General Assembly resolution 40/40 stresses the global concern at the fact that the economic situation in Africa has reached a highly critical stage and that it is bound to have world-wide repercussions. It also indicates the perception that international interests will be seriously affected by a prolongation of the crisis and that it is in the interests of the international community to assist in its alleviation and eventual elimination. The special session will surely reaffirm all those points.

As the Secretary-General said this morning:

"At this special session, we share the responsibility to work for a better future for the peoples of Africa, both as a matter of conscience and, above all, because we live in a world in which solidarity is the only guarantee of our survival. We must win the race against time." (A/S-13/PV.1, p. 13)

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

We note, in particular, the vigorous and praiseworthy efforts that the African countries themselves are making by initiating Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 and by committing their indigenous resources, up to 64.4 per cent of the estimated requirement, to the Programme. If the international community can come up with its external contributions, in both financial and other forms of support, including economic and trade measures, self-sustaining development will become a reality for many African countries. This is indeed a long-term challenge for those countries themselves and the donor community, as well as the United Nations system.

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

The underlying causes of the African economic crisis have been described in the document "Africa's submission to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly" as follows:

"The African economic crisis is due principally to insufficient structural transformation and the economic diversification that are required to move the continent away from inherited colonial economic structures, typified by a vicious interaction between excruciating poverty and abysmally low levels of productivity, in an environment marked by serious deficiencies in basic economic and social infrastructures, most especially the physical capital, research capabilities, technological know-how and human resources development that are indispensable to an integrated and dynamic economy." (A/AC.229/2, para. 15)

Perhaps the most serious manifestation of the crisis is food scarcity, with untold suffering for millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa, the causes of which are manifold, including drought and desertification. Such natural calamities have combined with inadequate agricultural inputs to magnify the shortages which are likely to persist unless concerted measures are taken to reverse the situation. Other manifestations are in general the results of underdevelopment, aggravated by such factors as the policy of destabilization conducted by the Pretoria régime, in particular against the front-line States, and the refugee problem, which constitutes an economic burden on the receiving countries.

The emphasis on food and agriculture and the need to address the problems of famine and decline in agricultural productivity enhances the prospect of more wide-ranging South-South co-operation. In recent years many countries of the South have grappled with similar problems with a measure of success and have in the process acquired more experience in indigenous technologies which they are willing to share with other countries. Perhaps it is in this area that countries like

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

Thailand can hope to make a contribution towards a long-term solution to the immense problem of food security in Africa.

While Thailand is a developing country with limited resources as well as its own economic problems, it has not been unresponsive to the needs of many African countries. The Royal Thai Government has made contributions to the affected African countries within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on a regular basis. In addition to its frequent contributions to funds for the benefit of the Namibian people and black South Africans, Thailand has rendered modest financial assistance to 12 African countries under the United Nations Trust Funds for the Special Economic Assistance Programme. Thailand also participated actively in the Second International Conference on Assistance for Refugees in Africa and the Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa and made pledges at both conferences. Moreover, my Government has provided technical assistance to several African countries under the Programme of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, as well as scholarships and training assistance under the Government's own aid programme for Africans in the fields of agriculture, rural development and health care in Thailand.

Before I conclude, my delegation would like to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General and to express its deep appreciation to all concerned agencies and bodies in the United Nations system for their valuable contribution to the preparatory work for this session. My delegation earnestly hopes that the special session will conclude its deliberations with success and substantive outcome that will provide a framework for actions by the international community to supplement indigenous efforts to the benefit of African countries, including the island States of Africa. For its part, Thailand will continue to co-operate within the full

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

limits of its capabilities with the affected countries and the world community in dealing with this critical problem of international concern.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, and the decision taken by the Assembly at its first plenary meeting of the current session, I now call on the Observer of the European Economic Community (EEC), His Excellency Mr. Lorenzo Natali.

Mr. NATALI (European Economic Community (EEC)) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the European Community, I should like to contribute to the debate on the future of Africa the testimony not only of a witness interested by the changes taking place in a continent neighbouring our own, but also of a protagonist long involved by virtue of the Lomé Convention and the co-operation agreements with the Mediterranean countries in the development efforts of African countries.

In the first of these capacities I can bear witness to the depth and rapidity of the changes under way in many of these countries. It is impossible not to be impressed by the willingness of most African leaders to admit mistakes and their determination to bring about changes - though clearly, given the economic problems and slim margin for manoeuvre facing poor countries, it must be a long time before current reforms can have a real impact. Their completion will call for patience and strength of will, especially since their price in social and political terms is likely to be high.

As a protagonist, the Community with its member States is the largest donor of development aid to sub-Saharan Africa, providing approximately 55 per cent of official development assistance. The Community is also Africa's leading trade partner, taking half of Africa's exports. It is thus deeply committed to the *future of the continent*. Furthermore, since it is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with its African partners, it supports their development policies and shares in

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

their failures and successes. It is therefore particularly attentive to changing circumstances so that it can contribute in good time to appropriate solutions.

In response to the hardship caused by the drought, the Community launched a massive emergency aid programme in 1985, followed a year later by a European plan for revival and rehabilitation in agriculture for the most affected countries. In total the supplementary European contribution reached approximately \$800 million.

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

In addition to those emergency measures, the Community is co-operating with African countries south of the Sahara in implementing the Third Lomé Convention, which came into force on 1 May. The Convention reflects the joint desire to continue and strengthen this contractual co-operation, which represents a new model for relations between industrialized and developing countries. The financial portion of the Convention is approximately \$8 billion - an increase of 60 per cent over the previous Convention. The present Convention provides sub-Saharan Africa with instruments which are particularly suitable for coping with situations that require financing on the most favourable terms and operational flexibility going beyond traditional forms of financial and technical co-operation in order to respond better to the specific needs of African countries as they undertake their reforms.

Furthermore, the Lomé Convention, like co-operation agreements with southern Mediterranean countries, goes beyond simple financial and technical co-operation by according trade advantages as well, offering Africa, without reciprocity or discrimination, privileged access to the Community market.

The initial, programming stage of implementation of the new Convention, which is now under way, has shown a convergence of African views with those of the Community as regards diagnosis, and a common determination to act on the implications by giving general priority to rural development, especially food production, as reflected in the allocation of the lion's share of funds, ranging from 60 per cent to 90 per cent, to that sector.

Naturally, measures to restore productive capacity must take account of long-term concern over the deterioration of Africa's natural assets and its soaring population growth. This underlies the decision by the Community Heads of State or Government that European aid, both Community and bilateral, should give priority to

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

a campaign of desertification control based on long-term commitment and consistent planning. The broad directions of this European plan were mapped out in April 1986; it is fully compatible with the concerns and priorities of the African countries themselves and the way is thus open for its implementation in the countries and regions concerned.

Furthermore, the Community will be devoting some of its financial resources to strengthening research and development capabilities in both Europe and the developing countries.

In the area of food aid, the Community attaches special importance to the purchase of food in African countries with surpluses, for the benefit of neighbouring countries which are in structural deficit. The Community thus provides help for the balance of payments of the one and food aid better adapted to the nutritional habits of the other. In this sense these triangular actions constitute support for the development of South-South trade.

Moreover, this year the Community has established an emergency food aid reserve over and above its annual food aid programme, so that it will be better able to help African countries in the event of another disaster comparable to that which they suffered so recently.

In connection with the efforts which I have just described, the Community finds that the success of assistance to Africa depends fundamentally on improvement in the international economic environment, which in recent years has been very unfavourable to Africa and may continue to be so despite the economic and financial upturn in the industrialized world. This is shown by the fact that Africa has lost traditional market shares in a number of products, often to other developing countries. But it is also obvious that the effects of this crisis have been materially exacerbated, especially since the end of the 1970s, by deteriorating

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

terms of trade and the problems caused by a rapidly accumulating debt burden. Despite some recent encouraging signs, the result has been a catastrophic decline in foreign currency resources. Two thirds of the export earnings of low-income countries now goes simply to pay for debt-servicing and food and oil imports. This means that many countries can no longer afford even to keep the economy running, let alone resume growth. It is generally recognized that in order to change this situation progress is necessary in three areas: trade, particularly in commodities; the debt problem; and financial flows.

As regards access to the markets of industrialized countries, the Community, as I have already said, accords special treatment to African countries. In general, we would stress the need to promote liberal market access, in the context of existing undertakings regarding the status quo and the rollback of barriers to trade. This also applies to the perspective of forthcoming General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) multilateral trade negotiations, in which African countries should be encouraged to play an active part.

Unfortunately, as far as commodities are concerned, prices seem to be on a downward trend. In this situation commodity agreements - provided they are properly conceived and administered - still have their uses, but the primary aim must be measures to improve productivity and diversification. This is what the countries concerned should be concentrating on, with the support of donors. Generally, such efforts will bear fruit only in the medium or long term. It is necessary, therefore, for the international community to undertake action aimed at stabilizing export earnings, similar to the Stabex and Sysmin systems operated by the Community, in order to tide countries over the transitional adjustment period. It was in that spirit that the Community recently decided to introduce a Stabex-type system for least developed countries not adherents of the Lomé

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

Convention. We reiterate our appeal to other countries to bring in comparable arrangements, at any rate for the least developed countries. These compensation systems are particularly important where the effects of the stagnant or falling purchasing power of exports have been exacerbated by a contraction of financial flows or an increase in the debt burden - two factors which are closely linked and must be tackled together in order to maintain an overall net official capital flow to Africa.

As regards debt, Mrs. Schoo, speaking on behalf of the Community and its member States, has already indicated the main point to bear in mind, namely, a case-by-case approach adapted to the medium-term structural adjustment policies followed by the countries concerned and applied as flexibly as possible. A substantial effort will thus be necessary on both sides to ensure the success of this approach, based on joint efforts by particular creditor and debtor countries.

(Mr. Natali, EEC)

As regards the third area, namely that of financial flows, we must do our utmost to ensure a revival of non-concessionary flows. In the case of the low-income countries in particular, however, it would be unrealistic to expect them to be able to benefit immediately from such a revival, for it must be recognized that the poorest countries in Africa above all are as yet only partially integrated into the world economy. And so initially, an increase in official development assistance, especially grants, is important in order to break this vicious circle. In this regard, if the need to do more for Africa is recognized - as the Heads of State or Government indicated yet again in Tokyo, and the European Community demonstrated with the renewal of the Lomé Convention - it would be rash to count on immediate massive supplementary transfers, and stress should be accordingly placed on using the available resources in the best and most efficient way.

In any event, a steadily progressive increase in international aid, which certainly remains indispensable, will be secondary to the determined efforts of Africans to stand on their own feet.

In conclusion, I express the hope that this special session will be the occasion for a political consensus on the need to consider the problems of Africa in all their complexity and for greater and more consistent efforts on the part of the international community to ensure that the sacrifices demanded of African countries are not in vain or do not become too intolerable.

In view of our close ties with Africa, I recognize that Europe must show the way. At all events, I can assure our African friends that the Community will exert its own efforts and influence to ensure that the consensus towards which we are working is given effect in our future decisions.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on His Excellency Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I call on him in

(The President)

accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975 and the decision taken by the General Assembly at its first plenary meeting of the present session.

Mr. PIRZADA (Organization of the Islamic Conference): It is a privilege for me, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to address this special session of the United Nations General Assembly convened to consider the critical economic situation in Africa. I am confident that under your mature and wise guidance, Mr. President, the General Assembly will adopt the decisions necessary to undertake concrete measures to combat and overcome the ominous threat that confronts the economic life of the people of Africa.

This morning we were privileged to hear the opening address of His Excellency President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, which has set the tone and direction of our deliberations. We are grateful to him for having placed the problem in perspective for a focused and structured debate. I am confident that his contributions will lead to concrete, pragmatic and practical recommendations for immediate action as well as to the adoption of medium- and long-term measures required to lift the pall of hunger, malnutrition and stunted growth from the great continent of Africa and pave the way for the optimum utilization of the rich human and material resources that Africa is blessed with, for the economic and social well-being of its peoples.

I should like to place on record our appreciation of the comprehensive studies that have been submitted, analysing the situation and suggesting solutions for the multifarious problems facing the countries of Africa, by the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as for the efforts of the Preparatory Committee to arrive at an agreed plan of action for adoption. I am confident that the detailed information made available will enable

(Mr. Pirzada, Organization of
the Islamic Conference)

us to adopt a final document reflecting the consensus of the international community and will set in motion the process of economic recovery in Africa to which we are all committed.

The academic and philosophic debate regarding the underlying causes of the critical economic situation in Africa has been conducted in international forums for many years. There may be varying explanations for the reasons that have brought matters to this critical pass. It cannot however be gainsaid that the present economic crisis in Africa has grown partly out of the deficient economic structures inherited by African countries from the colonial era, which made their economies dependent primarily on the exports of a narrow range of primary commodities. The problem was compounded by a number of internal and external factors. The internal factors stemmed from the inexperience of planners, which resulted in cumulative policy distortions, including inadequate allocations for rural development, agricultural research, primary health and education, mounting deficits, huge debt burdens and emphasis on large-scale enterprises of dubious economic value. External factors such as global economic fluctuations and recession, deteriorating terms of trade, falling commodity prices, debt-service problems and decreasing capital inflows have served to undermine an already fragile and vulnerable economic environment. Natural phenomena like drought and desertification have been an additional factor in creating a disastrous situation.

In the face of all these difficulties, the African leaders have demonstrated their determination to undertake a major effort for structural reforms and the diversification of their economies, as is evident from the adoption, in 1985, of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 by the Organization of African Unity Summit and of Africa's submission to the special session on Africa's economic and social crisis.

(Mr. Pirzada, Organization of
the Islamic Conference)

The African leaders have thus been engaged in a process of critical self-examination and reappraisal of policies. They have also taken it upon themselves to shoulder the major responsibility for a turn-about in their economies. They have identified for themselves the areas for priority action. They have made the political commitment to implement the programme for economic recovery at the 1985 summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity.

However, that internal commitment by itself will not be sufficient to lift Africa out of the economic morass in which it finds itself. It needs to be complemented by action at the international level through the infusion of necessary financial and capital resources, the lifting of protectionist measures against African exports, the provision of debt relief and the development and transfer of appropriate technological know-how to Africa.

The international consensus to assist Africa already exists; the international institutional framework is in place. What is required at this special session is the commitment to implement the decisions adopted by providing the major financial and other inputs that will be required. The major areas Africa needs to address, with the assistance of the international community are, in my view, food and agriculture, human resource development, effective use of natural and other resources and the implementation of development policies geared to the needs of individual countries, in order to bring about an economic environment which will release the productive energies of the people of Africa and lead to a transformation of their societies into vibrant, dynamic and self-sustaining economies.

The submission by African countries estimates a total requirement of \$US 128 billion over a period of five years for the implementation of the programme of economic recovery. Of that amount, the African countries have committed themselves to provide \$US 82.5 million. It should not be beyond the capacity of

(Mr. Pirzada, Organization of
the Islamic Conference)

the international community to provide the remaining amount of \$US 45.5 billion over a period of five years for the implementation of the programme.

The convening of this special session is evidence of the awareness of the world community that the problems being faced by Africa are the common responsibility of the entire world. We must now build on this awareness to prepare a strategy to eradicate the problem. The African countries and their leaderships, deeply conscious of the responsibility that rests on them for the economic and social development of their peoples and societies, have submitted specific proposals to tackle the problem. It is now up to the Assembly to adopt integrated and positive measures to combat this pernicious situation. Africa seeks a partnership with the international community to strengthen its development capacity. The success of this special session will be measured in the coming years by the extent of the commitment of the international community to this new partnership. This is a major challenge, a challenge I am confident will be taken up and met through the realization of the objectives, priorities and targets to be adopted by this special session of the General Assembly for the economic recovery of Africa.

The sixteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Fez in January 1986, mandated me personally to attend and report to the Islamic Conference on the decisions adopted at this special session. This decision flowed from the vital involvement of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for more than a decade in promoting greater economic interaction and co-operation among its membership, countries of the third world and the international community. Since the African countries form the majority of the membership of the Conference, special stress has been laid on the question of assistance to Africa in the economic plans of the OIC, and the Islamic Conference has paid particular attention the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and, more recently, to Africa's

(Mr. Pirzada, Organization of
the Islamic Conference)

Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which was adopted by the OAU Summit Meeting in 1985.

The assistance to Africa from the OIC membership has been channelled bilaterally, through OIC institutions, as well as through international organizations. According to information available to the OIC, bilateral financial flows to Africa stood at more than \$US 3 billion at the end of 1985. On the multilateral level, the Islamic Development Bank has contributed \$US 848 million and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has made available \$US 450 million to our Africa brothers. Another \$US 250 million have been channelled through the Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa. The OIC Committee for Solidarity with the People of the Sahel has also co-ordinated material and financial relief to the countries of the Sahel stricken by drought. Resources made available by the Muslim world to such international organizations as the World Food Programme and those involved in combating the drought in the Sahel stand at around \$US 300 million. The Islamic Development Bank has recently established a long-term trade-financing facility which has the potential to serve the African member States. I may also mention that the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Co-operation has placed the problems of the Sahel countries permanently on its agenda, and during 1985 additional aid pledges of around \$US 50 million were made to assist those countries in their battle against drought and its attendant consequences.

At the institutional level, special technical-assistance facilities are available within the OIC and the Islamic Development Bank to help African countries in the area of project identification and feasibility studies. At the level of member States there are also considerable possibilities of increased co-operation in skilled manpower training, rural development, health and basic infrastructure.

(Mr. Pirzada, Organization of
the Islamic Conference)

The Organization of the Islamic Conference has been deeply aware of the problems confronting the African continent and has not lagged behind in efforts to provide much-needed relief and assistance to the people of Africa. However, we also believe that the international efforts so far have been piecemeal and dispersed. The international community must adopt a more comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to confront the underlying causes and must not seek to address only the symptoms of the deep malaise that has struck the fledgling nations in Africa. The Organization of the Islamic Conference is prepared to participate in this effort to the maximum extent possible, and the decisions adopted at this session will be placed before the next Islamic summit meeting, scheduled to be held in Kuwait in early 1987, for endorsement and implementation.

The meeting rose at 9.30 p.m.