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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Thursday, 29 May 1986 at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. DE PINIÉS

(Spain)

later:

Mr. HEPBURN

(Bahamas)

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 3.20 p.m.

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

Mr. PANGALOS (Greece): Mr. President, at this historic session of the Assembly, I wish to express the hope that with your long experience in the United Nations you will successfully guide our efforts in seeking the lasting and accelerated development of the African continent.

Greece particularly welcomes this special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, since this is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. For the first time, all nations of the world are joining together to examine ways and means of helping an entire continent overcome its present difficulties and achieve social and economic development. The initiative could become a unique example of international solidarity. The task is vast and extremely complex. The support of all concerned is needed if the endeavours of the African countries to restore the necessary economic growth are to succeed. So far as Greece is concerned, we intend to contribute, to the utmost limit of our possibilities, to the success of this special session.

Our attitude is not guided by a sense of international human solidarity only. Greece for centuries has promoted very close ties with the African continent, where important Greek communities are active, thus contributing to an increase in genuinely friendly relations and links of close co-operation with the peoples of Africa. Mutual interest and sincere co-operation have led to close political ties, which have been further strengthened in recent years within the wider context of Greece's international orientation. It is my Government's intention to further promote these ties in the political, economic, commercial and cultural fields.

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

The whole continent of Africa, and particularly the sub-Saharan States, was severely tried by the disastrous droughts and famine of 1983-1985. The internationally co-ordinated response to this calamity was successful and managed to save thousands of lives. It was one of the most encouraging examples of international co-operation and solidarity, with the United Nations playing an important role. The people of Greece were profoundly moved by the crisis and responded by participating substantially in the international relief efforts. Those efforts have continued through the first half of 1986. Greece has made an important contribution in food aid to Ethiopia, Madagascar and the Sudan. In 1986 the Greek Parliament, despite serious budgetary constraints imposed in other fields, adopted its first bilateral aid programme for African countries. Furthermore, Greece, as a member of the European Economic Community (EEC), played its part within the Community in the adoption of a series of measures to deal with the African emergency.

However, the challenge remains. It is not enough simply to try to alleviate the results of natural disasters. Long-term efforts should focus on fundamental structural changes and on strengthening the productive capacity of African economies. The international community is beginning, through the present special session, its attempts to deal with the basic needs and difficulties of the African continent.

The problems facing Africa are not of recent origin. They are the disastrous conclusion of a long process of exploitation of human and natural resources that defies reason. The internal development needs of the peoples of Africa have, since the eighteenth century, systematically been subordinated to the successive priorities of the northern metropolitan countries.

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

The majority of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa gained their independence less than 30 years ago. At that time, poverty was prevalent, infrastructures were almost non-existent, educational levels and workers' skills were very low, and agriculture was still at a very early stage of development. The prevailing conditions were further aggravated by adverse developments on the international economic scene. The oil crises, the world-wide recession of the early 1980s and the instability and gradual decline of commodity prices are among the well-known factors which have so negatively and deeply affected the economies of practically all African countries. Moreover, political difficulties have produced, in many cases, fragile systems with inadequate institutional infrastructure and management. In this context, cases of inefficient and misdirected use of resources should also be noted. This situation worsened further owing to the recent weather-induced environmental disruptions.

This deteriorating situation, which was due to a combination of internal and external factors, has led the African States to start taking the measures necessary to deal with the critical situation. On their own initiative they have recently embarked upon important policy changes in order to improve their economic management and strengthen incentive schemes in agricultural production.

In 1985, African Heads of State and Government adopted the Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. The Programme outlines the determination of the African people to initiate durable structural change, and points out the principal directions in which the much needed external resources must be channelled to ensure a successful recovery. The Programme has greatly influenced our thinking and it is an indispensable input for our work at this special session.

The consensus emerging among the African countries on the need for policy changes is an encouraging development and must be further pursued with

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

determination. However, it is for the African countries themselves freely to adopt the measures necessary for the reversal of the negative trend of their economies. There should be no outside pressure to force the African States to adopt policies they are unwilling to accept. History has shown that outside pressure is, in the long run, an ineffectual way to resolve difficulties.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Preparatory Committee and its Bureau for the exemplary way in which they have tried to bridge the unavoidable differences of opinion that exist. The deliberations of the Preparatory Committee have identified a number of areas in which action is needed. The most critical of these are: the question of the increased flow of resources, the better use of aid, the problem of debt, and food availability and production.

There is clear recognition that external resources alone cannot cause a breakthrough in the development efforts of the countries in the region. However, it is difficult to see how recovery can start without a significant injection of liquidity. The crisis in Africa clearly calls for the mobilization of more funds. In the context of effective international action, substantial resources could be released from the arms race and channelled into the desperately needed economic and social development of Africa.

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

There is an emerging consensus that the particularly difficult external economic environment has caused a severe loss for Africa of much needed export earnings. The present trend in concessional finance should be improved and the lending capacity of multilateral development institutions should be strengthened. The successful replenishment of International Development Association (IDA) resources by an amount of \$12 billion is essential, and improvements should be devised in the operation of multilateral frameworks for debt reorganization. We fully endorse that approach.

Better use of aid to African countries should be ensured by improved co-ordination between bilateral donors and international agencies and banks in support of policies of African Governments geared towards more efficient use of resources.

The debt situation of Africa should be of particular concern to all members of the international community. The total debt of sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to be of the order of \$70 billion. Although the amount is not exorbitant in view of the large number of countries concerned, that debt constitutes a crushing burden on African States, particularly in view of the fragile situation of their economies. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that during the past two years there has been a virtual withdrawal of voluntary lending by private banks. The declining trend of flow from major sources when Africa needs them the most should be of serious concern to this Assembly. Africa needs immediate relief from the crushing burden of its debt.

As regards the question of food availability and production, I should like to refer to the thorough analysis of the agricultural problems of Africa contained in the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery. The thrust of the analysis is towards the transition from food emergency to the establishment of long-term

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

measures for self-sustaining development and self-sufficiency in food for the African continent. The efforts of African Governments should be supported by a considerable flow of concessional resources. The European Community and its member States contribute substantially to that end, both bilaterally and within the framework of the Third Lomé Convention.

In the quest for efficiency we should not sacrifice certain fundamental human needs. The adjustment process should not be seen as an economic exercise only but as a broader approach encompassing basic elements, such as: the preservation of minimum levels of nutrition, the provision of acceptable services for all age groups, and support of young children. Attention should be paid to low-income families and the maintenance of decent levels of health and education. The human being is the ultimate objective of economic development.

I would be remiss if in this context I did not refer to the abhorrent policies of apartheid. It is a practice which, apart from being a flagrant violation of human rights, also undermines the development process in Africa. The Government of Greece once more most categorically condemns apartheid and demands that the South African Government eliminate it. My Government equally condemns South Africa's continued acts of violence, which extend even beyond its borders.

As far as the question of Namibia is concerned, my Government demands the unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) without further delay.

The challenge of this Assembly is to mobilize the efforts of the entire international community to assist the African continent to overcome its present difficulties. We support all efforts to strengthen open, balanced, fruitful co-operation based on dialogue and equality. The international community should

(Mr. Pangalos, Greece)

consider all feasible and effective measures so that, through international financial co-operation, policy recommendations and guidelines can be worked out for the alleviation of the serious position of many African countries.

In concluding, I wish to stress once more that Greece, which has been deeply touched by the situation in Africa, will continue to address the continent's problems with the great attention they deserve. I reiterate my Government's commitment to the cause of the development and progress of Africa. We are ready to share with our African friends the experience gained from the development efforts of my own country.

Mr. MIKULICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The problem of the critical economic situation in Africa, which is before this special session, has deep social, economic and political roots. We share the opinion of those delegations that view it as the result of such long-term factors inherited from the colonial past as the social and economic backwardness and poverty of the continent, the neo-colonial exploitation of African nations by the monopolies of the developed countries of the West, and severe exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations.

Many facts reflect the critical economic situation of African nations, and the following data may serve as an example. In 1985 the gross national product per capita in most African countries fell to the level of that of 1960 and was 20 per cent lower than in 1980. As pointed out by the representative of Nigeria at this session, the survival of one in five Africans depends on food imports.

We express our sincere sympathy with the suffering masses of Africa. We believe that the crisis in Africa cannot be overcome by isolated acts of assistance. Radical reform of the entire structure of the present inequitable international economic relations is needed.



(Mr. Mikulich, Byelorussian SSR)

First of all, the general political situation in the world must be normalized. The spiral of the arms race, caused by the imperialists, and their dangerous plans for the militarization of outer space are diverting gigantic amounts of capital from meeting social and economic development needs, reducing the efforts of the international community to promote the progress of the developing countries, and forcing the latter to spend already scarce resources for military purposes.

We support those delegations at this session that have denounced United States aggression against Libya. It is common knowledge that the United States policy of State terrorism encourages Israel and Pretoria in their aggressive acts.

Recently the racist régime of South Africa carried out yet another act of banditry in attacking the neighbouring States of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. In its statement in this connection on 21 May the Soviet Government stated emphatically that

"The demand of the world community for the application to the racist régime of the Republic of South Africa comprehensive mandatory sanctions in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should at long last be carried out, in the interests of the peaceful future of our planet."

The disastrous situation in developing African countries and the arms race imposed by the imperialists are directly interrelated.

(Mr. Mikulich, Byelorussian SSR)

On 15 January 1986 the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M. S. Gorbachev, said:

"The pattern of arms instead of development must be replaced by the reverse - disarmament for development."

We wish to emphasize the importance of establishing a comprehensive system of international security, the basic principles of which were formulated by the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. And the Soviet Union has made another important proposal - that a world congress on problems of economic security should be convened in the future. All these proposals are directly related to the solution of the problem of the critical economic situation in Africa. The resolutions of the General Assembly aimed at the restructuring of international economic relations on the basis of equitable and democratic principles provide a solid basis for the implementation of those proposals.

All countries must intensify their efforts to bring about the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

Representatives of certain Western States talk about employing so-called private initiatives to solve the problems facing African countries. Under cover of such assertions they are pursuing a policy of unlimited expansion of foreign private capital, above all by means of their transnational corporations, and attempting to force African countries to develop in such a way as to keep them within the sphere of the world capitalist economy as subordinate suppliers of raw material.

Because they control from 75 to 95 per cent of exports from Africa and manipulate prices, foreign transnational corporations appropriate 90 per cent of

(Mr. Mikulich, Byelorussian SSR)

the proceeds from the sale of African iron ore, bauxite and cotton, and 60 to 80 per cent of those from the sale of tea, coffee, cocoa and citrus fruits.

In this connection, we must state with regret that in the report of the Preparatory Committee to the present special session the question of the predatory activities of transnational corporations in many developing countries of Africa has been passed over. It must be noted that, owing to the stubborn unwillingness of Western countries, the code of conduct for those corporations has not yet been developed. The corporations, because of their selfish interests, do not want to take into account the basic development needs of Africa.

Several representatives speaking from this rostrum have demonstrated a desire to force the African countries to abandon the participation of State organs in the solution of economic development problems. Behind this there is the wish to leave the door wide open for the biggest capitalist monopolies, and give them the opportunity to exercise unrestricted control over the economy - and not only the economy - of African countries. It is precisely the uncontrolled functioning of the chaotic forces of private enterprise and the yoke of big monopolistic capital and its transnational corporations that stifle all manifestations of initiative by African States and lead to the one-sided, monocultural development of their economies, which suffer the adverse consequences of fluctuations in world prices. In order to solve their problems African countries need external assistance that will enable them to become self-sufficient and function without such assistance in the future.

The Byelorussian SSR makes its own contribution to the provision of aid to African countries. Industrial equipment, agricultural machines and other products manufactured in our Republic are being supplied to many African countries, while

(Mr. Mikulich, Byelorussian SSR)

1,500 students from 45 African States study at institutions of higher education and specialized secondary schools in Byelorussia. Our specialists share their accumulated experience and knowledge with their colleagues in a number of African countries. Byelorussia helps African countries also by its voluntary contributions to the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. Byelorussia will continue in the future to lend assistance to African States.

The Byelorussian SSR shares the view expressed in the document on the economic situation in Africa adopted at the 21st session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in July 1985, that the economic problems of African countries can be solved only through a more rational use of resources for the development of agriculture and by strengthening their own industrial base and other sectors of the economy.

As was justly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General to the fortieth session of the General Assembly entitled "Development and international economic co-operation: long-term trends in economic development":

"Industrialization has failed to provide the dynamic force required for the structural transformation of the African economies." (A/40/519, para. 337)

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR therefore favours the adoption at the special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa of decisions which will be not a step backward but a step forward, with the objective of establishing a new, just international economic order, eliminating discrimination and arbitrariness from international economic relations, exercising effective control over the activities of transnational corporations, securing the just settlement of the problem of foreign debts and ensuring the economic security of the countries of the African continent.

Mr. POP (Romania) (interpretation from French): I should like at the outset to stress the importance that Romania and its President, Nicolai Ceausescu, attach to this special session of the General Assembly devoted to the critical economic situation currently besetting Africa. The Romanian people and socialist Romania have consistently shown their support for and solidarity with the peoples of Africa in their struggle to eradicate colonialism once and for all, to consolidate their national independence and to develop in full freedom along the path of economic and social progress.

In the view of the President of Romania, the gravity of the world economic situation, in particular the serious situation of the developing countries, demands that everything possible be done, in a fresh and realistic approach, to tackle the economic questions, the underdevelopment and the foreign debt of developing countries, and to establish a new international economic order.

The present session is taking place in conditions in which the international situation continues to worsen as a result of the stepping up of the arms race, above all the nuclear arms race, the existence of many conflicts and areas of tension, the world economic crisis, and the policy of force and interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Against this sombre backdrop we have witnessed a worsening of the extremely difficult situation of the developing countries, especially the least developed of them. The economic and social crisis in Africa is assuming tragic proportions. The very difficult situation inherited from the colonial period has been compounded by persistent, widening disparities in international economic relations, to the detriment of the developing countries.

(Mr. Pop, Romania)

These disparities and inequities have been reflected in the persistence of dominant positions in the financial and banking system, the policy of excessively high interest rates, the increasingly heavy burden of foreign debt, and the protectionist measures that deny the products of African and other developing countries access to the markets of developed countries.

At the same time, the world economic crisis is further aggravated by the continued increase in military expenditure. The gigantic material, technical and scientific, human and financial resources involved - currently assessed at the colossal figure of \$1,000 billion per year - are an increasingly heavy burden on the shoulders of the peoples of the world, acting as a brake on their economic development and an impediment to international economic and technical and scientific exchanges by creating new artificial barriers. The developing countries are the first to feel the damaging effect of this situation, which impedes their efforts to achieve economic and social progress.

All that is further compounded in Africa's case by the catastrophic effects of the prolonged drought, the process of desertification and other natural catastrophes, together with considerable losses caused by the persistence of the serious conflicts on the African continent, particularly in southern Africa.

We believe that our present debate should help us to understand better the extremely injurious consequences for the world economy as a whole of the phenomena related to underdevelopment and thus lead all States to redouble their efforts to overcome these grave difficulties.

Like other delegations, we to stress the special significance of the endeavours of the African countries within the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

(Mr. Pop, Romania)

in producing Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. It is true that the essential elements in giving effect to that Programme will continue to be the efforts of the African countries themselves, the mobilization of all their material and human potential in the cause of achieving their fundamental national objective: economic and social emancipation in condition of full independence, equality of rights and co-operation with all the other States of the world.

As a socialist developing country, Romania views its relations with the countries of Africa in the context of its general policy of close co-operation with and support for with other developing countries. We practise this co-operation drawing on our experience as a country which itself has been called upon during the past 40 years to resolve complex problems arising out of its economic and social development. On the basis of our experience, Romania has identified and is developing various plans and programmes of co-operation with the countries of Africa. The especially favourable climate created by frequent contacts between President Nicolae Ceausescu and the Heads of State or Government of a number of African countries has led to the signing of some 400 agreements, which have contributed greatly to a substantial development of trade and economic co-operation. This co-operation takes various forms, including the establishment of joint enterprises and the implementation in African countries of a considerable number of economic projects.

Co-operation between Romania and the countries of Africa is developing in a fruitful manner, on the basis of economic principles of equity and mutual advantage.

Bearing in mind the priority demands of the process of economic recovery and development in the African continent, as reflected also in the Programme submitted

(Mr. Pop, Romania)

to this session, Romania intends to strive similarly in the future to strengthen and expand its economic relations with the countries of Africa.

To this end we are ready to participate, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis and in conditions of mutual benefit, in the carrying out of economic projects of priority interest to African countries. With regard to the areas envisaged in the Programme submitted by the African countries, Romania is studying with interest the possibility of participating in the concerted implementation of projects aimed at developing and improving agricultural land, setting up and equipping centres for the mechanization of agriculture, developing activities in connection with livestock, constructing facilities for the storage and distribution of foodstuffs, supplying plants and providing technical assistance in the industrial sector, exploiting forestry, producing fertilizers and building materials, and assembling trucks, tractors and agricultural machinery.

Romania has always been ready to provide all possible support in the training of national management personnel - an essential element in any rapid development process. In recent years thousands of young Africans have studied in universities and institutions of higher education in Romania. We shall continue in the future to provide all the necessary assistance in the training of new intakes of specialists.

A lasting solution to the problems faced by the African countries must be sought in the context of redoubled efforts to eliminate underdevelopment throughout the whole world. We take the view that it is in the interest of all States, including industrialized countries, to ensure the eradication as soon as possible of underdevelopment and the great economic gulf that divides the world into rich countries and poor countries.



(Mr. Pop, Romania)

The grave problems of underdevelopment cannot be solved by any one group of States; it can be solved only through the participation of all the States in the world, within the United Nations. Quite clearly, this calls for a fresh policy based on the equality of all nations.

At the present time the gravest problem besetting the developing countries is that of external debt, which in recent years has reached disquieting proportions. We therefore believe that there is need for urgent action to find ways to solve this problem. To that end, Romania has proposed that creditor States, banks, financial institutions and developing countries identify a set of principles capable of governing negotiations with each country concerned. We have in mind in particular the cancellation or reduction in various proportions of existing debts, the rescheduling of debt over the long term, the fixing of ceilings for interest rates and foreign debt servicing rates, and access to loans on advantageous terms.

International credit should cease to be a burden on debtors and a brake on international co-operation. It should resume its role of stimulating economic relations between States and economic growth in the debtor countries. Thus, the problem of debt will be resolved not by condemning the developing countries to stagnation and a deterioration in their already low standard of living, but by action capable of stimulating economic growth. It goes without saying that we advocate reform of the international monetary system to make it a factor of stability, so that it meets the needs of all States, including developing countries, and is based on democratic management.

(Mr. Pop, Romania)

Support for the developing countries must include the equitable solution of other important problems. Protectionist policies and restrictive measures must be eradicated, access to markets of the products of developing countries must be facilitated, the stability of commodity prices must be ensured, and there must be a fair relationships between the prices of commodities and those of industrial products. We are thinking, also of the need to facilitate the substantial transfer of up-to-date technology on advantageous terms to support the training of national managerial personnel and to put an end to the brain drain.

Measures to reduce military expenditure so that the funds thus released can be used to support the programmes of the developing countries are undoubtedly of great importance. The reduction of military expenditure would constitute a source that would make it possible to increase considerably international assistance to developing countries.

In 1979 Romania proposed the establishment of an international support fund for developing countries based for the most part on savings made through disarmament measures. The conclusion and appeals contained in the Lomé Declaration of African countries, of August 1985, are also significant.

In this context, we wish to stress that the scale and complexity of the problems faced by the developing countries make it necessary to plan to maintain close co-operation and strengthen their solidarity and unify their action. We emphasize here the message of solidarity addressed to the special session by the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 that took place recently in Brazil.

Like other developing countries, Romania sees the solution to all these problems as lying in close co-operation with the developing countries and among all countries of the world. This is the true meaning of the proposals put forward by Romania, within the framework of the United Nations, for breaking the deadlock in

(Mr. Pop, Romania)

the North-South negotiations and organizing for this purpose an international conference, with the participation of both the developing and the developed countries, to find overall solutions to the problems of underdevelopment and define the principles of the new international economic order and to promote the solution of the world economic crisis, the economic and social development of each nation and international co-operation based on equality of rights and mutual advantage.

In conclusion, I assure you, Mr. President, that the Romanian delegation is ready to make its contribution and to co-operate actively with the delegations of other countries so that by our concerted efforts we may obtain results that will meet the aspirations of the African countries, really help them overcome their economic difficulties and ensure their economic and social advancement.

Mr. SIDDIKY (Bangladesh): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express on behalf of my delegation our particular pleasure in seeing you preside over the deliberations of this historic session. I also take this opportunity to extend our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his inspiring leadership in mobilizing the United Nations system to assist our brothers in Africa in the most trying of circumstances that they have ever faced.

Never before in human history has virtually an entire continent faced disaster and destruction, hunger and famine, of such intensity and magnitude as that which has been witnessed in Africa over the last three years, threatening the very existence of millions and millions of people. It is to the credit of the valiant people of Africa and the support and solidarity extended by the international community that the darkest period of agony and suffering is now largely behind us. But unless the comity of nations as reflected in this world body is able to come together in solidarity to prevent the recurrence of that tragedy and take concrete

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

steps here in this forum to support our African brothers in achieving the objectives they have set for themselves for the lasting solution of the problems faced by the continent, the convening of this special session will be meaningless. The efforts that went into fighting the emergency situation must be appropriately broadened and focused to meet adequately the objectives of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the medium- and long-term perspectives.

This was the message that we received from His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in his inspiring and thought-provoking statement at the beginning of this session. This is the message that we see in the report of the Secretary-General. This is what my delegation believes to be the vital responsibility of this Assembly. We wish to express our solidarity with our brothers in Africa in their determined struggle to bring their continent back on the road to durable and sustained development.

It is important to note that a number of unfortunate factors to the detriment of the interests and well-being of the people of Africa converged, making the crisis very severe and intense. Some of those factors were natural, others man made. Some of them were the consequence of retaining the previous structures of the economies, while others resulted from developments in the world economy. It is equally important to note that this situation developed over a period of years. In the 1960s and 1970s the food self-sufficiency ratio of African countries dropped consistently to a point at which total food production in the region as a whole was growing at only half the rate of growth of the population. Over a period of two and a half decades the basic economic structure of the African countries remained

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

virtually the same while the objective realities changed drastically. Subsistence or near-subsistence sectors dominated vast segments of the African economies.

Roughly two thirds of the least developed countries belong to the continent of Africa. Yet the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action, adopted by the international community in 1981 in favour of these countries, experienced setbacks from the beginning. The global economic recession, the collapse in commodity prices, the adverse terms of trade, the decline in real terms in official development assistance, increased protectionism, high interest rates and currency fluctuations are some of the factors which joined together to bring havoc to the African economies.

Through all these difficult circumstances, and largely as a consequence of them, the accumulated external debt of the African countries increased more than seven-fold over the decade 1974-1985 to a staggering \$175 billion. The heavy burden on these countries of servicing this huge debt can easily be imagined.

Most of the African countries continued to remain dependent on the production and export of one commodity or a very limited number of commodities, the prices of all of which have been particularly affected by the global recession. Commodity prices in 1982 were at their lowest level since 1940.

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

African countries lost some \$13.5 billion over the first three years of this decade owing to the fall in commodity prices alone.

This illustrates the fact that the crisis in Africa is indeed an extension of the crisis faced by the developing countries as a whole. The difference is that in Africa other factors have combined to aggravate and intensify the crisis to an extent which defies all comparison. For Africa, inseparable from this crisis is a tragedy more deeply rooted and less immediately apparent: the destruction of its land and the disruption of its ecosystem. The rate of growth of Africa's population, which will double in 22 years and increase about eight-fold in about 70 years, makes the situation even more complex.

The most reassuring thing of all in this critical situation was the following declaration of the African Heads of State at their summit meeting last July:

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

The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 has been presented to this session in the true spirit of global interdependence and reflects a commitment to overcome the handicaps of the past and a determination to move forward. We believe that the attainment of food self-sufficiency, reversal of the cycle of drought and desertification and reduction of the population growth rate are the areas which should be considered first among the priorities for action. We also strongly believe that a development strategy which, besides having economic goals, restores and preserves the natural support system is best suited to the African situation. In this great endeavour, the international community must come forward to assist Africa to pursue the path of successful development; otherwise,

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

all the determined efforts that the Africans make will be vain and the crisis will linger on. This holds true not only for Africa, but also for other developing countries, whose development needs and aspirations must also receive attention, unless the international community wishes to shift the crisis elsewhere. The need for Africa to receive the focused attention of the international community must be acknowledged in the perspective of the overall development of the developing countries.

Africa is a continent of many potentialities and promises. The resource endowments of that vast continent, both natural and human, are waiting to be harnessed. It is necessary to create conditions conducive to their development with adequate international support. For the unimpeded development and progress of the countries in Africa, nothing is more important than a favourable international climate based on a spirit of interdependence and mutual respect, free from the menace of apartheid. Africa must be enabled to devote single-minded attention to the struggle for development. It is the fervent hope of my delegation that the efforts that have been undertaken by the United Nations will reach a successful culmination and will set an example of global determination to work together for a better future for Africa, and thereby indeed for all the people of our planet. The promise implicit in the "act of faith" committed in the convening of this special session should be redeemed by concrete action.

Mr. GUMUCIO GRANIER (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I have the honour to transmit to the Assembly a message from Mr. Guillermo Bedregal Butierrez, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia:

(Mr. Gumucio Granier, Bolivia)

"Bolivia cannot remain indifferent in the face of the desperate situation in Africa, and we naturally feel deep sympathy with our brothers on that continent. Our own experience of crises in Bolivia makes it easier for us to understand this problem and we thus fully comprehend African aspirations and the efforts that have been made to overcome those problems.

"Bolivia understands that in that continent the growth of food production has not kept pace with population growth and in some cases, has fallen far behind. Many African countries are threatened by generalized famine, which is compounded by the climatic disaster of drought, which in turn leads to the disruptive phenomenon of refugees.

"The situation in the continent is desperate. Yet the efforts directed towards recovery, growth and development undertaken by our brothers in Africa despite the grave political and social implications which they entail will not succeed without full and effective support from the international community for their development activities in the medium and long terms, without which there can be no lasting solution to the present emergency situation.

"At the same time, there is something else that we cannot overlook - and here I reaffirm the message that I sent on the occasion of the brutal act of armed aggression perpetrated by the Government of South Africa against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It was a message of categorical rejection of the abhorrent régime of apartheid and repudiation of racial discrimination of any kind, with its profound injury to the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, and a reaffirmation of our opposition to and condemnation of any and every act of armed aggression."



(Mr. Gumucio Granier, Bolivia)

My delegation would like to express its thanks to Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), who, when he opened the debate at this special session of the General Assembly, spoke to us in the voice of Africa and bore eloquent witness to the commitment of that continent to efforts to overcome its present distressing adversities.

The problems affecting Africa today are complex. Nevertheless, they clearly demonstrate that the economic dimension of the crisis is profoundly interrelated with the political and social dimension, all these elements being the result of historical developments which cannot be ignored because of their profound effect on the social and economic structures in African countries.

Twenty-five years ago the international community gave its resolute support to the struggle of African countries to attain independence. Bolivia was present at that time and made its voice heard, affirming its full support for the anti-colonial cause, whose success is not complete since Namibia is still kept in chains, in open defiance of the United Nations and the conscience of free peoples.

The community of nations has for 40 years publicly rejected the abhorrent practice of apartheid. Bolivia has consistently supported all the measures adopted to combat that racist practice and we now reaffirm our position, for we believe that as long as segregation persists among the races in southern Africa it will not be possible to speak of the development of the human person.

The Members of the United Nations have come together in this special session to give special consideration to the grave economic crisis in African. Bolivia, which is one of the nations of Latin America hardest hit by the world economic crisis, has come here today to bear witness to its solidarity with an understanding of the efforts of the Governments of Africa to resolve the problems resulting from this crisis.

(Mr. Gumucio Granier, Bolivia)

My delegation wishes to emphasize three of the external factors which affect the situation in Africa and which also have profound repercussions on other regions. They are: the staggering drop in the prices of commodities; the collapse of international markets, owing in part to the pernicious protectionist measures that have been taken; and, finally, the heavy burden of external debt, aggravated by the erratic situation of high interest rates.

Bolivia associates itself with the appeal made by the African States for the donor States to join in this crusade to eradicate backwardness and resolutely open up a new chapter in history. For that, it is necessary to make some innovative changes in the practices of international co-operation. The donor countries must realize that emergency situations call for programmes financed with freely available and immediately delivered resources, in addition to projects financed through regular and existing co-operation programmes. The timely availability of such special resources is of the greatest possible benefit to Governments and acts as a catalyst for other activities, in particular those in which individuals in their private capacity may be able to engage.

The machinery to establish freely available aid flows should be flexible, and monitoring systems should be efficient and should not impose restrictions that would have an adverse effect on State sovereignty. We are trying in a short space of time to overcome long-standing and almost traditional situations of injustice and backwardness. Thus, it is vital for the new approaches to be innovative and not seek to set conditions that will undermine the political independence achieved at such sacrifice.

In addition to new forms of assistance, the African States require changes in the situation relating to the heavy burden of external debt and debt-servicing.

(Mr. Gumucio Granier, Bolivia)

Liquidity and availability of currency are vital for policies designed to achieve the reactivation and recovery of the productive apparatus.

Hence, Bolivia supports initiatives to ensure the rescheduling and lightening of the external-debt burden, with generous payment deadlines that will make possible the systematic and sustained generation of the resources necessary for the proposed programmes. In that regard, we congratulate the Western nations that have announced in this body new, flexible criteria for approaching the debt problem, and we urge other nations that have not yet done so to adopt the same kind of criteria.

My delegation has noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Governments of the African States to overcome the internal causes that aggravate the economic crisis. Readjustment and modernization of State machinery, co-ordination of development plans, and overall criteria to promote social change must eventually bear positive fruit. The experience of other countries with their own development should be useful. South-South co-operation offers broad promise for the future.

The Governments of the African States have shouldered their responsibility to promote their own development and to shape the destiny of their peoples. The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery proves this. The Government of Bolivia expresses solidarity with the peoples of Africa and associates itself with their Governments in urging the international community to take up the historical challenge of bringing about transformation in Africa. The times call for political commitments at the highest possible level. The cause of development in Africa should be the cause of all our peoples.

Mr. PAPAJORGI (Albania): The Albanian people and its Government have followed closely and with concern the great difficulties the African peoples are facing today, because those difficulties affect the living conditions of millions

(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

of people and their vital present and future needs. Entire regions of the African continent are experiencing great poverty. The food situation, which continues to deteriorate, actually constitutes one of the most serious concerns of many African countries, where famine has been wreaking havoc.

But the consideration of the critical economic situation in Africa would not be satisfactory and fruitful if we did not uncover and discuss the real motives that have caused it and that help to maintain it. It is a well-known fact that Africa is one of the richest regions of the world in natural and human resources. The peoples of Africa possess all the physical and intellectual capabilities to meet the needs of production in agriculture and industry. They have the great vitality to face today's rates of economic, scientific and cultural development.

That is why the causes of the existing situation in Africa are to be found in the century-old colonial domination, during which the peoples of the continent were severely exploited and oppressed, when Africa and its peoples were kept in a state of complete ignorance and backwardness. For the colonialists, Africa was an inexhaustible source of vital raw materials and of their slaves. For centuries, the natural and human resources of the African continent served the interests of foreign metropolitan countries. They laid the foundation for the present wealth and development of those countries.

No one can deny the fact that Africa would not be suffering these serious difficulties if the great natural resources and human potential of the African countries had been used for their benefit. Had that been done, the peoples of Africa not only would have been able to meet their food needs today, but would have attained all-round development for the future as well. What is worse, the chains of the old colonialism in Africa have today been replaced by modern exploiters, by

(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

the neo-colonialists, by the multinationals, by imperialist Powers - and in the first place the two super-Powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, whose main aim is to continue plundering the natural resources of Africa and to maintain the African countries as a source of raw materials.

The resources of the soil and sub-soil of most of those countries continue to be the object of cruel and barbaric exploitation. Because of the discriminatory policy, the raw materials of Africa are sold at lower prices. The practice of stimulating a single-product agriculture, a policy pursued so far by the multinationals, ensures them huge profits at a time when the African countries are confronted by various difficulties, including a lack of daily food.

This entire complex of activity by the neo-colonialists in Africa is designed to keep the countries of that continent in the existing situation of inferiority and economic disadvantage; it is designed to impede the all-round and proportional development of their agriculture and industry and of all other vital branches of their economies as well.

The overall crisis that has the capitalist-revisionist world in its grip has affected the African countries too. Such practices as the high interest rates, the fluctuation in the value of the dollar, and the protectionist barriers - practices which big monopolistic capital pursues in keeping with its interests - have created serious problems for the economies of the countries of the African continent. A direct consequence of such measures is a reduction in the exports of many African countries, which has caused a great imbalance and has led to economic stagnation.

(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

Another way of plundering Africa is through the debt mechanism. Many African countries have incurred huge debts to various imperialist Powers. As everyone knows, not only are all the loans granted on the most severe terms, but sometimes the amount to be paid in interest swallows up all that the debtor countries produce. In those circumstances, they are obliged to acquire new debts in order to liquidate the existing ones.

The so-called aid that the imperialist Powers claim they are giving the African countries has not helped and will never help change and improve the existing situation in Africa. Those Powers have not helped and will never help the African countries to overcome the serious difficulties they are facing today, including famine. That is because imperialist aid never has had and cannot have a generous character. The philanthropic gestures of the super-Powers are nothing but neo-colonialist chains and the aim is to force the African countries to run up new debts and to get them involved in other, more complicated obligations. Experience has shown that in no circumstances have the super-Powers ever invested a dollar or a rouble without first calculating their political, economic or military profits.

The African peoples have suffered and continue to suffer many casualties and great destruction because of regional conflicts in various parts of the continent. As part of the general situation prevailing in Africa today, those conflicts cannot be considered outside the context of the whole hegemonistic policy of the two imperialist super-Powers. Their expansionist aims and policy incite and instigate such confrontations between peoples. Having created those turbulent situations, the super-Powers try to exploit them in order to divide the African peoples and create more favourable conditions for their intervention whenever and wherever their interests are in danger. By stimulating the regional arms race, the

(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

super-Powers try on the one hand to sell arms from their stockpiles and on the other to grab the daily bread of the African peoples in exchange for their arms and bullets, which are then used to kill innocent people. At the same time, they do not hesitate to carry out acts of aggression against African countries, as they do in various other regions of the world.

In addition, a number of African countries and peoples are suffering the grave consequences of the aggressive imperialist policy practised by the racist régime of South Africa. The Pretoria régime's most recent act of aggression, against Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana on 19 May this year, which has been strongly condemned by the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, constitutes a fresh crime against the peoples of those countries. It is precisely that aggressive, racist policy of South Africa that has led to the increase in tensions in southern Africa and the creation of more dangerous situations there. In applying its militaristic policy, the racist régime of South Africa has always had, and it continues to have, the overall support and encouragement of the imperialist Powers - the United States of America in particular. That support encourages the apartheid régime of South Africa brutally to suppress and exploit the Azanian and Namibian peoples, as well as to commit acts of aggression against neighbouring African countries. This policy of Pretoria forces those countries to use a large part of their funds for defence purposes, instead of using them to improve and develop their economies.

There is no doubt that the blind forces of nature, such as the serious drought and desertification, have had negative effects on the economies of many African countries. But the policy of plunder and exploitation pursued by the super-Powers and the other imperialist Powers makes it even more difficult to take effective measures that would help relieve and minimize their effects. The Albanian people

(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

understand the situation that the African peoples are experiencing, because in the past we have had experiences of the same kind. Before liberation, famine, poverty and backwardness dominated the entire life of our country. In those circumstances, after liberating the homeland we had to continue the struggle to reconstruct the country, to change its old face. New Albania started that reconstruction and development from scratch. By relying on our own internal human and natural resources, we have built a multi-branch economy, with heavy and light industry, advanced agriculture and progressive education and culture.

Just after the liberation, some foreign so-called advisers, allegedly wanting to help us, insisted that to develop our economy we should concentrate only on the extraction of minerals and the cultivation of some agricultural products. They promised us that Albania would never want for anything, and therefore should not invest in the development of agriculture, the building of a minerals processing industry, metallurgy, energy and so on. But we did not do as those advisers told us, and we were not wrong. As a result of the policy we have pursued, today we have an independent, sovereign country, with an economy capable of meeting the country's needs in basic products and of overcoming the difficulties created by natural calamities, such as drought, floods and severe winters. With exports covering imports, owing not a penny to other countries and being completely self-reliant, we have created the necessary conditions for a continuous improvement in the working people's material and cultural well-being.

As a small country, we do not have the ability materially to assist other peoples fighting for their political, economic and social liberation and independence. However, in addition to offering the benefit of our modest experience in building a stable, independent economy, we see it as our obligation



(Mr. Papajorgi, Albania)

to continue to expose the aggressive policy of the imperialist Powers, in particular the super-Powers, and their plans for enslavement.

In supporting the efforts of the African countries to overcome the critical economic situation through the mobilization of their natural and human resources, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania affirms that each country has the right to choose its own path of development and independently to decide its own future.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great hope for this session, Sir, to see you presiding over its proceedings, especially in view of the great competence and objectivity with which you guided the deliberations of the fortieth session.

There is not, perhaps, much to be added to the subject under review, since many speakers have expressed their opinions and dealt with the various aspects of the problem. This debate is an indication of the dire economic crisis faced by the continent of Africa. It also demonstrates the international community's interest in the crisis. Previous speakers have amply analysed the crisis and suggested ways and means of solving it.

We believe that the African countries know best the nature of the crisis and the way to solve it, since they are living through it and have daily experience of its causes and consequences. We therefore wish to avoid elaborating on the details of the crisis. However, we must note with great appreciation the creative, objective and comprehensive analysis in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which was approved by the Heads of State and Government of African countries at their meeting in Addis Ababa in July 1985.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

We believe that the Priority Programme reflects a true sense of responsibility and a genuine collective effort aimed at achieving a set of clearly defined goals.

If the famine that struck large parts of Africa last year demonstrated the devastating economic tragedy suffered by Africa, the Priority Programme reveals the great courage and ambition aroused in the African nations by that overwhelming challenge. It also reveals that self-reliance and collective action in resolving the crisis are the sine qua non of the achievement of economic development.

If Africa has resorted to the international community in an effort to meet some of its economic needs, it has done so only because of the belief that a great part of the problem is attributable to the international dimension of current economic relations. It should be emphasized that those relations are dictated by the nature of the international economic system, which is imbued with conditions that are extremely unfavourable to the countries that export primary products. This constitutes a major obstacle in the way of development in the African nations.

Moreover, the African States have resorted to the international community in order to regain some of the debts that have accumulated over several decades as a result of the policies of colonialism, which drained the economic resources of Africa. There is no doubt that the advanced industrial nations and multinational corporations bear a part of the responsibility for the present situation and should compensate Africa for that economic drain.

The interest of some parties in the promotion of Africa as a mere source of cheap raw materials for the sake of their development could be no more than a short-term, partial remedy for Africa. Longer-term development for Africa requires interdependence and self-reliance. Thus, it must be emphasized that collective rather than selective development is the answer to Africa's problems. That is the thrust of the Priority Programme.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

We believe that the internal factors underlying the current economic crisis are intertwined with external factors. Similarly, the political causes of the crisis should not be separated from the economic ones. In this respect, the policy of apartheid and destabilization directed by South Africa against neighbouring countries constitutes a serious obstacle in the way of development in southern Africa. The combined efforts of the international community are essential if that policy is to be eliminated.

The countries of third world, including African countries, have been forced to allocate a substantial part of their budgets to armaments to defend their independence, especially in the context of the unstable international political climate and the hegemonistic attempts being made by certain major Powers. Hence, it is essential to put an end to international tension, whose prime victims are the developing countries.

Africa's development has been one of the fundamental considerations in the foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates. Despite our newly won independence, and despite the pressure generated for domestic development, the United Arab Emirates has allocated a high percentage of its national income to the developing countries, especially African nations, with which we share deeply rooted ties. Consequently, over the past decade my country has extended some \$3 billion in the form of aid and direct financial grants to African countries. The total amount of aid extended to the most affected and least developed countries is \$3.5 billion.

The Abu Dhabi Fund for Economic Development has financed development projects in Africa in the amount of \$350 million. The Fund subsidizes 28 projects in non-Arab African countries. Those projects, which are undertaken in 20 such countries, cover infrastructure programmes, manufacturing industries and light industries. The financing by the Abu Dhabi Fund is offered on easy, soft terms.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

In addition, the United Arab Emirates contributes \$40 million to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, which was established on my country's recommendation. The United Arab Emirates also contributes \$3 million to the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African and Arab Countries. We have also contributed an additional \$5 million in support of the Fund's activities. Since 1979 the United Arab Emirates has contributed \$10 million to the African Development Fund. My country also responded positively in the aftermath of the catastrophes and crises that afflicted Africa last year by extending emergency assistance in the form of food and medicine on both the official and the private level.

One of the guiding principles in the assistance policy of the United Arab Emirates is the belief in promoting development for development's sake. We therefore attach no strings, political or otherwise, to the aid we offer to Africa.

As we review these figures, we are sure that Africa needs much more than that. Our assistance was motivated only by our duty and our commitment to the principle of development. I wish to emphasize from this rostrum that despite our economic difficulties, with which all here are familiar, the United Arab Emirates will never abandon its obligations to the African countries. We will bear our share of responsibility and fulfil our obligations within the limits of our ability, irrespective of whether such action is recommended by the special session. Our commitment to Africa stems from our conviction that a developed and economically stable Africa is a free Africa. We therefore consider ourselves and Africa to be very much in the same boat, a boat that we must all see safely into port.

Africa has come to the international community with a clear vision and a specific programme; therefore, it requires a clear commitment and a specific answer.

Mr. CONSALVI (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, I have pleasure in extending to you the greetings of the Venezuelan delegation. We are confident that your experience and wisdom will play an important role in guaranteeing the success of this special session.

In conformity with the principles underlying the creation of the United Nations and the provisions of its Charter, it is the job of this Organization to promote social progress and the improvement of the quality of life of peoples in keeping with the broadest concepts of freedom and justice. Thus, the United Nations must act as a centre for the co-ordination of the common efforts and determination to find solutions to economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

We are met today in this Assembly to seek, within the framework of co-operation and closer international solidarity, the solution to a problem which is of concern to the entire international community: the critical economic situation in Africa.

Africa is a vast continent. Most of its constituent countries are young States which became part of the community of nations barely two decades ago. To date their efforts have focused on their own consolidation and the creation of national unity, which are indispensable if the demands of economic and social development are to be met.

For several years the African countries have faced complex structural problems stemming from such factors as the scarcity of basic services, vulnerable economic infrastructure, fragile political foundations, increasing population pressure and demand for social participation, and natural factors such as the desertification and drought to which they have been mercilessly subjected. Those internal problems have been compounded by the impact of the world economic crisis, as a result of which African economies have suffered severe deterioration, with increasing debt and internal tension and paralysis of the means of production.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

The sudden stagnation and continuing deterioration of physical structures have had an alarming undermining effect on the economic capabilities of these countries, and have led to hunger and the disruption of their economies, dragging the African continent into an arduous struggle for mere survival. The dimensions and implications of this grave crisis perturb all mankind. As the Secretary-General has said,

"The African crisis has claimed more human lives than were lost in any war in history."

Out of a population of 500 million, some 100 million people - a large percentage of them young people and children - are harshly affected. Forecasts based on present developments, on the assumption of nothing being done to alleviate the situation, would be horrifying and unacceptable.

Yet while it is true that the economic situation in Africa is critical, it is no less true that Africa is a continent favoured by nature. It has enormous agricultural and mineral potential; if this were rationally and profitably exploited with organized co-operation among the African States themselves and the international community in general, a sound foundation would be laid for the economic development of those countries.

The African countries have taken account of those considerations in their Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, adopted by Heads of State and Government at last year's summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We firmly support that Programme.

The contribution of international agencies and non-governmental organizations, like bilateral assistance, has been great, and this should be recognized. However, it has not been possible to resolve the problems; only incidental improvements have been brought about.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

A careful analysis of the economic situation in Africa is impossible without relating the African economy to the unacceptable context of world economic relations, which enables the industrialized countries to benefit from those relations and to gain obviously unfair advantages.

The programme of action before us calls for annual additional aid averaging \$10 billion. In our view, that is a modest figure compared, for example, with the amount of reverse transfer of resources from developing to developed countries in recent years. We trust that the international community will respond to this urgent, understandable challenge with the necessary co-operation.

The delegation of Venezuela agrees that the top priority for Africa should be agricultural development with a view to achieving self-sufficiency in food. Agricultural development is vitally important not only for Africa, but for the whole developing world, for it will halt the spread of poverty, disease and hunger.

We believe, too, that the development of human resources is important. The training of the individual to be a factor of greater productivity in society is vitally important, particularly in Africa, where human potential has not been properly developed. We believe that Africa's principal resource is its people. The time has come to give due weight to the human factor; if we do not, population growth in Africa will become an obstacle difficult to overcome. It is necessary therefore to tackle problems of training, education, cultural identity and the role of women in the economic development of these countries. It is necessary also to support the peoples of Africa without attempting to impose alien systems upon them, and it is time that this was done.

Another priority for Africa is to combat natural factors such as desertification and drought, which limit economic prospects. Scientific advances can contribute to victory in this hard battle against nature.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

Many of Africa's problems are not alien either to Latin America in general or to Venezuela in particular. But we believe that the dimensions and scope of the African crisis are very special, since the ability of those countries to respond is greatly restricted by the present situation and by their own economic realities. Thus, we supported resolution 40/40, of 2 December 1985, which calls on the Secretary-General to convene the present special session, and shall support the conclusions of this session.

None the less, we insist that the stabilization of commodity markets and access to the markets of the developed countries are problems common to the entire developing world, and that therefore we must seek comprehensive solutions which will ultimately benefit all countries of the world, developed and developing alike. Preferential, non-reciprocal treatment for our exports and the protection of their purchasing power are a requirement of the entire developing world and should therefore be established.



(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

The problem of the external debt is extremely serious in Africa. Although it is a phenomenon shared by many developing countries, we recognize that in Africa it has specific features. It is obvious that those countries have a minimal capacity to take action to face what is a very harmful situation. A just solution must be found to this problem without neglecting, of course, the foreign debt problems of other developing regions, which represent a very serious potential danger to the world economy. As a country that adhered to the Cartagena Consensus, we reaffirm our view that a political solution must be found to the foreign debt problem of developing countries. In this process debtors and creditors share responsibility, and no one should seek to assign that responsibility solely to the countries whose stability is at stake.

Venezuela has been watching this situation with the greatest interest and hopes that international co-operation will manifest itself in a very concrete and effective way in the form of measures that will promote the full incorporation of Africa into the economic and social development process.

Among the specific measures of co-operation that have already been announced in this Assembly, we wish to highlight those put forward by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada. Measures such as these should also be taken by other developed countries.

By participating in this session, we wish to emphasize our solidarity with Africa. This is a suitable opportunity to reaffirm the concern of Venezuela and its readiness to strengthen its bilateral relations with the countries of that region and thus reinforce the ties which we have cultivated in this forum and other multilateral forums, in the light of our sympathy with the many shared efforts to bring about a better, more worth-while world for all peoples.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

We have said time and again that the balance of the international economic and political system requires intelligent, flexible and concerted international economic co-operation. The developed countries cannot turn their back on this fact, nor can they in this case forget the links that united them at one time to the African continent. We believe that the actions of the industrialized countries should be aimed at a transfer of resources and knowledge that will directly contribute to alleviating the African situation - a transfer that should be carried out bearing in mind the real needs of Africa within the broad and resolute approach proposed in the programme of action. We, the other developing countries, for our part, could and should answer the appeal of our brothers in Africa with South-South co-operation activities, following the norms set by the Caracas Programme of Action for Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries.

I think that one aspect that should be looked at with especial care is the so-called monitoring or follow-up machinery proposed in the draft plan of action. The emergency situation arising from this crisis should not lead us to take hasty decisions which we may regret in the future because we failed to make specific the distinction between international technical assistance to carry out these programmes - which is necessary - and potential interference by third parties in the internal affairs of States, which would, of course, be inadmissible from any point of view.

The developing countries have committed countless errors, and Latin Americans do not have any particular advice to give, rather, we have very harsh experience to share. One of those mistakes has been to believe that solutions can come only from the big industrialized countries; we have despised our own abilities, our own resources and our own possibilities. We, the developing countries, must be the protagonists in shaping our own destiny. And what is true for Latin America and the Caribbean is also true for Asia and Africa.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

On this point, it is worth referring here to the historic Arusha message on collective self-reliance. These principles should continue to guide and govern all developing countries. In this context, we note with satisfaction that African interregional co-operation is taking on an ever greater impetus through the work of the Organization of African Unity and its subregional integration systems; and that in fact intra-continental monitoring or follow-up machinery is envisaged as a first step towards an international machinery.

The United Nations system has bestirred itself to address the critical situation affecting this part of the world, and the General Assembly, mindful of its role, will continue keep the question under review. We hope that the international community, and particularly the industrialized countries, which cannot shirk their responsibility, will not remain indifferent to the problems of Africa, because such indifference would be tantamount to making again the old mistakes of history and would lead to a truly tragic conclusion.

Once again, on behalf of Venezuela, we reaffirm our determined, and unswerving solidarity with the African countries in their great causes, and our consistent position in favour of the independence of Namibia, the elimination of apartheid and racial discrimination, sources of violence and instability which not only contribute to aggravating the general outlook for Africa but are incompatible with the principles of the Charter of this Organization.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): We are assembled here in special session to consider an issue of far-reaching consequence: the critical economic situation in Africa. The socio-economic crisis facing the African continent, and for that matter most third world countries today, may be attributed to many factors and cannot be resolved through ad hoc measures or in isolation. Self-sustained development needs collective efforts and co-operative programmes drawn up from both medium- and long-term perspectives.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Indeed, in today's interdependent world it is virtually impossible for a country or a group of countries of a particular region to conceive of effecting major structural socio-economic transformations without the supportive action of the world community. It was with that in view that my delegation looked forward with a measure of optimism and expectation to this special session, the very first devoted by the General Assembly to any particular continent. This opportunity for beginning a new and stirring chapter in international co-operation should therefore not be lost. In other words, the international community is faced with a test: whether it is prepared to recognize and respond to the travails and tribulations of a continent reeling from serious social and economic problems or, despite all, choose to remain uncertain and indifferent.

My delegation applauds Africa for showing imagination, for demonstrating such an exemplary degree of unity and, above all, for the political will and pragmatism reflected in the five-year African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990. Based as it is on the premise that African countries are themselves responsible for their development, the Priority Programme is very logically rooted in the concept that it is up to the African countries themselves to undertake the social and economic steps or to initiate the policy reforms necessary to sustain a medium- and long-term plan for economic recovery on a priority basis.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The grim situation facing the countries of Africa is not hidden from the international community and has been projected in a frank and forthright manner in the relevant Organization of African Unity (OAU) document.

My delegation, at the outset, notes with appreciation that African countries have committed themselves to finance 64.6 per cent of the Programme. Also worthy of appreciation are the frankness and objectivity with which the challenge of drawing up such a bold and sweeping recovery scheme has been taken up. In particular, my delegation finds it entirely realistic that the primary focus of the Priority Programme - or 44.8 per cent in terms of estimated cost - should be on agriculture, which not only is the mainstay of the African economy but all too often in the past has been the chief determining factor between prosperity and deprivation in Africa.

My delegation also finds it eminently sensible that this segment of the priority programme not only takes into account the particular situation in each country but also envisages other specific subregional and regional measures to reinforce national measures in the agriculture and food sector. Similarly well-conceived are such supportive schemes as pertain to the rehabilitation and development of agro-related industries, to the development of transport and communications and to the sphere of trade and finance.

We also find ourselves in full agreement with the envisaged programme concerning drought and desertification. We are particularly pleased to note that such measures envisage not only massive afforestation and reforestation but also better management of water resources, including river basins, through concerted and carefully integrated efforts at the national, subregional and regional levels.

As Nepal itself is facing many socio-economic problems - with the same degree of severity, in many instances - we can fully understand and sympathize with Africa

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

in the critical economic situation it faces. Indeed, it is precisely such understanding that also explains our appreciation of the Priority Programme's well-placed emphasis on such other national development priorities as are detailed in the section on human resources. We also find ourselves in agreement with the rationale that has been advanced for the institution of a number of major policy reforms, such as those relating to improvement of the management of the economy, and various difficult adjustment measures undertaken in the recent past.

As a land-locked country, Nepal is encouraged by the attention that has been focused on the special needs and problems of the land-locked and semi-land-locked countries of Africa, including those relating to storage, transport and transit, the alleviation of which requires large investments.

Similarly, as a least developed country, we share the view that some of the more serious of the external constraints that have aggravated the economic crisis in Africa might well have been ameliorated had it not been for the failure of the international community to honour its commitments in pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action in favour of the least developed countries, as well as several United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) resolutions on trade and development.

We therefore support in particular the call for the international community to make special efforts to increase its contributions to the least developed countries of Africa to enable them to achieve the objectives of their country programmes within the framework of the Substantial New Programme of Action.

This brings us to the other important segment of the Priority Programme, which is that concerned with complementing the efforts of the African countries by assistance from the international community.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

What needs to be borne in mind is that the unfavourable international economic outlook has made it virtually impossible for African countries to bring about economic recovery on their own, since exogenous factors have contributed to the current situation. A number of external corrective measures are imperative and obvious in this context. These fall into two broad categories: official development assistance and debt servicing.

Although my delegation is aware that the \$US 45.6 billion - estimated as the resource gap that the international community is called upon to fill for the five-year period covered by the Priority Programme - may not be considered a small sum in these days of financial stringency, we believe that it is a necessary and, in the long-term, pragmatic investment for underwriting prosperity and peace in Africa.

While noting that there is now wider support for international co-operation within a multilateral framework than seemed to be the case in the not-too-distant past, we stress the urgency of providing meaningful debt-servicing relief to the African countries, whose condition, without it, could be much worse than it is today, even if the \$US 45.6 billion five-year resource gap is met.

My delegation thus strongly supports the reasoned proposals in the Priority Programme dealing with international support measures. In particular, we endorse the urgency of the debt-servicing requirements of African countries during the next five years, which are estimated at an average of between \$US 14.6 billion and \$US 24.5 billion annually.

Africa is the continent which has suffered most from colonial exploitation. But, if some of the present economic problems besetting that continent can indeed be traced to such exploitation, no one can deny the vigour and exhilaration that have been injected into international relations by the wave of African independence that has swept across the continent since 1957.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

On this occasion, Nepal acknowledges Africa's many contributions to peace and delights in the fact that it can very rightly be called the continent of non-alignment. Yet, it is hardly a secret that that continent is suffering from political destabilization, owing particularly to Pretoria's racist policy of apartheid, which is at the root of much of the violence and instability currently sweeping southern Africa.

South Africa's racist policies have been responsible for diverting precious human and other resources from development purposes, especially in front-line States such as Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, whose sovereignty Pretoria so flagrantly flouted only the other day. Such acts of remorseless terrorism continue to add to the economic woes of the already over-burdened African people and contribute to the steady flow of refugees into countries neighbouring South Africa.

My delegation therefore appeals to the international community to consider the creation of a political climate conducive to the peace and stability which are indispensable for the success of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery - in this case by working for the dismantling of the apparatus of apartheid.



(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

In conclusion, we declare our total support for Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), in both its African and international dimensions. We do so, fully aware of the legitimacy of the African cause and, as one of the least developed countries, because we fully understand - and sympathize with - their plight. We wish this special session all success, conscious that the socio-economic progress of the African peoples would not only greatly contribute to the advancement of society as a whole but also make a definite contribution to the cause of regional - and world - peace. In the process, it could make a singular contribution to strengthening the credibility and efficacy of the United Nations as the world's most effective multilateral agent for development.

Mr. DAZA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to convey to you my country's congratulations on your election to preside over the special session of the General Assembly. Your remarkable work during the fortieth session of the General Assembly makes us confident that, under your skilful guidance, this special session will produce the positive results for which the world hopes and which Africa in particular so needs.

Chile, a small and distant country, has come before this Assembly to express in the clearest possible terms its support for and solidarity with Africa in the face of the critical economic situation besetting that continent.

We are advancing with great strides towards the year 2000 and, as this century approaches its close, man has acquired wealth beyond the imagination of even the most ambitious dreamers. He has acquired almost complete mastery over his environment and space, while technological development has attained unimagined levels, transforming knowledge into the last true raw material. The ability to produce knowledge is the essential foundation of wealth.

For this reason, it is an affront to the human conscience that there still exists a vast part of the world where the average life expectancy is only 49 years,

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

where there are countries that have an annual per capita income under \$400, where the average daily caloric intake per capita is only 90 per cent of the minimum daily requirements for human beings. The World Bank maintains that Africa today is poorer than it was in 1960. While there are parts of the world that are very well prepared to take up the challenges of the coming centuries, here we have a continent on its knees, tragically destitute, unable to make its vital contribution to the development of the world.

Of late, natural disasters and the generalized spread of famine have inspired spontaneous solidarity across the world which has brought relief and saved many lives in Africa. Nevertheless, manifestations of solidarity, however significant, do not solve problems. Charity, however noble a feeling it may give, is no basis for economic development.

A noted African writer has said that the peoples' poverty can be converted into wealth through a pact of solidarity by which their spirit feels the spur of advancement.\*

I ask myself whether this special session will yield such a pact of solidarity for a continent which is indissolubly bound up with our destinies and the future of the world.

Shall we be able to find this spur which will impel us to set aside our persistent selfishness and to tackle the realities of Africa in such a way as to sow alongside the wheat and the maize the seeds of hope among the peoples of that continent?

Shall we be able, faced as we are with the dilemma of uncertain assistance or of ever more complex development programmes, to opt for the latter in the knowledge

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\* Mr. Hepburn (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

that at the end of the day we shall all have benefitted through the growing contribution of African economies to the world economy.

The documents before us from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the report of the Secretary-General, and others, make it very clear that in the daunting situation facing Africa, in addition to natural disasters there are internal and external factors which have contributed to the situation.

In the first group, concrete action is needed from the African countries themselves. The second group can only be tackled if international co-operation really works, and this is the challenge thrown down before the Assembly.

The President of Senegal in his eloquent address referred to the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER). In that Programme the countries of Africa have frankly recognized their limitations and have described the major undertakings to which they are committed. They have clearly indicated the activities which will enable them to overcome the mistakes they have made and that they themselves acknowledge.

The African countries stress that agriculture must be a priority in the future development of Africa. On the basis of experience, my country, together with many others wholeheartedly supports that stress of agriculture. It might be useful to recall the experience of Latin America in this respect.

In past decades the need for industrialization in Latin America often caused us to neglect agriculture and to speed up the industrialization process at agriculture's expense. Our industrialization efforts disrupted the necessary harmony between the two sectors and we have had great difficulty making up for lost time.

It is useful to bear in mind Latin America's experience and to assess it in relation to the emphasis on agriculture which has been given by the African Programme, so as to avoid committing the same errors in the process.

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

Endeavours by Africa are one part of the process; the other inescapable part is international co-operation based not merely on the demands of justice but also on the very raison d'être of the international community.

In our Organization, in all international forums, from time to time we stress the fact that we live in an interdependent world. The situation affecting the African countries is incompatible with such interdependence. Therefore, the problem of which the Assembly is seized today is one that affects the entire international community and, for that reason, the community has a duty to act.

We said earlier that there are external factors for which the African countries are not responsible. Their problems are in part significant relics of their colonial past. Protectionism, decline in raw material prices and the debt burden are some of the problems that have made a short-term economic situation far worse and it can be resolved only through the resolute will of the industrialized countries. On the other hand, racism and apartheid have introduced violence and political instability into Africa, presenting an impediment to the region's economic development.

Many of those countries have made recommendations in this debate about the way in which Africa should carry out economic reforms and make structural changes to overcome the present crisis. I think we have the right also to expect from those making those recommendations that they take the reform measures necessary to stabilize the world economic situation, which has seriously affected the development endeavours of the developing countries.

Africa's problems are a tragic example of a situation which also besets most of the countries of Asia and Latin America.

No one can contest that the savings capacity of the African countries is insufficient to enable them to overcome the present situation. This means that the

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

wealthier nations must tackle the financial needs of the countries in which famine has become a constant feature of their populations.

Africa's agricultural and industrial endeavours need free trade - that is, free from any artificial restrictions. The effective participation of those countries in the world economy is a requisite that needs to be met in the development process which this Assembly has set itself the task of initiating. In this trade liberation process there will be many actors: the industrialized countries, the developing countries and the African countries themselves.

We in the developing world are well aware of the difficulties and of the trials and tribulations involved in the process of economic growth and must also make our contribution to African recovery. Similar geographic and climatic problems and objectives among developing countries are an important source of stimulation of co-operation in the search for solutions based on our own living reality, resources and energy.

To that end, the recent agreement on the global system of trade preferences between developing countries is a very important landmark. It is essential that it enters into force as soon as possible since it can be very significant for the countries of the South in general and African countries in particular.

For its part, Chile has entered into technical assistance agreements in the past with some African countries in various fields. We are ready, within the capacity of our own scarce resources, to co-operate in technical assistance in the mining, forestry, fishing and health sectors. I think we have been sufficiently successful and acquired enough experience to be able to make a valuable contribution to the African nations.

The challenge facing the international community at this time is daunting owing to the scale of the problems and the needs of the African peoples. The response of this special session needs to be on a similar scale. This special

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

session gives us a unique opportunity to shape this solidarity pact - to which I referred earlier - between the international community and Africa and to agree on concerted support measures to supplement Africa's own economic recovery effort and place that continent once and for all on the path of development and prosperity.

The African world needs our co-operation so that its peoples will be able to feed themselves, have work and develop as human beings, thus once again finding hope and confirming Bertrand Russell's words that poverty is not the inevitable heritage of man.

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

No one is in a better position than Ambassador de Piniés to conclude successfully the important work of this special session of the General Assembly to meet the challenge to all mankind raised by the grave economic crisis on the African continent. We are especially pleased to address to him our sincerest congratulations on his unanimous election.

The holding of this special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa is vivid testimony to international solidarity, to our solidarity with our fellow human beings the world over, and to our determination to fulfil a humanitarian and political duty implicit in the United Nations Charter. It shows that, whatever their differences of political opinion, Governments and States can work together to come to grips with critical situations in a common and joint effort to solve tragic problems posed by famine, dire poverty and natural disasters which have caused despair and threaten the peace and stability of our world.

We should like to pay a stirring tribute to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its President, Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal, for taking the initiative of convening this special session. We should also like to commend most warmly Mr. Edgard Pisani, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, for his outstanding contribution.

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

Two years ago our Secretary-General, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose tireless efforts and dedication to the ideals of the Charter we hail, alerted the international community to the alarming economic situation in Africa and appealed for international solidarity. Peoples and countries wedded to peace and justice, especially those of the developed world, responded both generously and effectively to that appeal and saved millions of human lives and alleviated the sufferings of millions of others.

Nevertheless, while the current situation is no longer so alarming, many serious problems are still far from being solved. On the one hand, drought and desertification continue in certain parts of the continent, threatening the lives of millions of people and hindering the process of national development. The continuation of substantial humanitarian emergency assistance in order to prevent the spread of famine, malnutrition, widespread disease and poverty remains a vital necessity.

On the other hand, these natural disasters exacerbate the many internal structural problems of African countries. Africa is the continent where the standard of living of the people has diminished over the past 10 years and this downward trend will continue if adequate steps are not urgently taken. Over the past decade, the continent has no longer been able to ensure food self-sufficiency.

The development crisis of African countries most surely results from endogenous factors. The African Ministers, during the fifteenth extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held in Addis Ababa last March, attentively considered and lucidly analysed the nature of the problem. They acknowledged that

"lack of structural transformation and the widespread low level productivity of the African economies are the fundamental causes of their continued underdevelopment and persistent economic crisis". (A/AC.119/2, p. 8, para. 20)

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

Nevertheless, the plummeting prices of primary goods, the increase in protectionism, monetary instability and fluctuations in rates of exchange and the drop in real value of official development assistance have exerted strong pressures on Africa. These critical economic variables which characterize today's world economy have been reflected in human and social terms by excessive costs which considerably compromise the development efforts of the African countries.

Finally, the increased indebtedness and difficulty of servicing the debt have had disastrous consequences for African economies. Although, admittedly, in absolute value the indebtedness of African countries is low as compared with that of countries on some other continents, we must emphasize that continuing natural disasters have exacerbated it beyond the payment capacity of those countries. According to the World Bank, the annual debt servicing for sub-Saharan African countries will be \$11.6 billion for the years 1985, 1986 and 1987.

It is a matter of urgency that we find a lasting solution to the problem of external indebtedness which weighs heavily on the African countries. The rescheduling of the debt is only a palliative. In order to try to put an end to this problem, many countries have adopted adjustment programmes and have been trying hard to increase their exports while reducing imports. Nevertheless, these measures often have the result of compromising development prospects with harmful consequences for the living conditions of people.

It is equally urgent for debtors and creditors to work together and try to find equitable solutions. Our General Assembly has already made a commitment in this regard by adopting at its thirty-ninth session resolution 39/29, to which was annexed the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa. Paragraph 17 of that Declaration recommends, among other things, the

"total or partial conversion of official development assistance debts into grants".



(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

This can be carried out only if we take joint steps in close consultation and co-operation with all interested parties. Furthermore, on account of the overlapping and complexity of the problem which requires determination on the part of both debtors and creditors, appropriate measures at the international level must be undertaken in order to solve the problem of African indebtedness so as to enable Africa to carry out successfully its programme of economic recovery. In this connection, my delegation endorses the African proposal to make thorough preparations for an international conference on the foreign indebtedness of African countries with a view to arriving jointly at comprehensive and lasting solutions.

In addition to natural disasters, the lack or insufficiency of the necessary structural changes in the economy and an unfavourable economic environment, Africa must cope with another major obstacle which drains a major portion of its energy. Indeed, to make matters worse, many African countries have become victims of repeated and barbarous aggressions committed by the racist minority régime of South Africa, as evidenced by the recent attacks carried out against Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana. The human losses and material damage and the increased cost of defending their national sovereignty constitute an enormous burden upon the economies of the front-line States. As everyone knows, the Kampuchean People was the victim of a similar war of invasion and occupation; indeed, the crimes we suffered were committed by a régime which was no less cruel and arrogant than the enemy of the Namibian and South African peoples. Therefore, the Kampuchean people and its Coalition Government indignantly condemn the policy of apartheid and aggression pursued by the Pretoria racist régime. Only the eradication of that régime and the establishment of an egalitarian and democratic multiracial society, safeguarding freedom for all in South Africa, and Namibia's independence will enable the peoples and Governments of southern Africa to come to grips with the problem of economic and social development.

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

In spite of these current human tragedies and social disasters, Africa remains a continent of the future with enormous mining and agricultural potential. The African peoples have shown in difficult times that they have a great capacity for adaptation and survival. Although today one of the weakest links in the chain of the interdependence of the world's economy, Africa, we are certain, is capable of being a sound part of the international community and of playing its full role. Once it has overcome the critical current difficulties - which are not insurmountable - Africa will surely be able to begin a true process of economic and social development.

During the twenty-first session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African Heads of State or Government adopted a programme entitled "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990" in order to lay the groundwork for sustained economic growth and self-sustaining development, thanks to far-reaching structural changes. This programme gives priority to the development of agriculture and to substantial reforms in the system of economic management. We fully support this programme, which shows the courage and determination of Africa to take its own destiny in hand with foresight and the spirit of responsibility and dignity which have always characterized it.

In order to attain these objectives, Africa has actually committed itself to making all the necessary sacrifices. It has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to mobilizing all its human and financial resources. Last July, African leaders reaffirmed that the development of the African continent is incumbent, first and foremost, on their Governments and peoples; they decided to take more effective steps to overcome the current food crisis and, above all, to prevent a recurrence by going to its root causes.

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

Nevertheless, the current crisis in Africa is so serious that, even if all the local resources, both financial and human, were to be employed, African countries would not be in a position to carry out successfully their struggle for survival and development without substantial external assistance. The international community has already responded satisfactorily and effectively by coming to the assistance of stricken African populations. It must, however, support the praiseworthy efforts of the peoples and Governments of Africa by providing them with additional economic and financial resources and by ensuring a more propitious international economic environment. By helping to establish a new stable and just economic era, the international community, and especially the developed countries, would no doubt help to facilitate the arduous and painstaking tasks of our African brothers and sisters to set up the basis for a lasting economic development and recovery. Indeed, economic interdependence means that the world economy cannot sustain regular development unless the African economy has been put on the right track. The prosperity of Africa will benefit not only Africans, but also the development of the world economy. Furthermore, many bitter political and economic experiences of the past have shown us that there cannot be prosperity, stability or national security if we do not take into account the interests of others. The interdependence of interests is currently an undeniable reality. Africa in a state of crisis is a constant threat to world peace and security.

Kampuchea has been linked to Africa for many years by bonds of friendship and fraternal solidarity, based on sincere mutual respect and the sharing of the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Non-Aligned Movement. These bonds stem from the peaceful nature of our peoples and from a common determination to

(Mr. Thiounn Prasith,  
Democratic Kampuchea)

defend our independence and freedom in honour and national dignity. They have been made manifest and enhanced in the past, as well as in the present, by mutual aid and support in the most difficult times of our history, especially when those difficulties have called into question the survival of our nations and peoples. The people of Kampuchea and the peoples of Africa have been close friends at all times and in adversity they have become brothers.

Even though they may now have to face a difficult struggle for national survival, of which we are all aware, the people of Kampuchea and its coalition Government have always responded positively, within our modest means, to the appeals made by the international community to come to the assistance of our African brothers and sisters. Once again today, in speaking here, we should like to make our modest contribution so that the act of faith, so movingly proclaimed by His Excellency, Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, might become a living and vibrant reality to mark the point of departure for the recovery of Africa and the strengthening of its important and necessary role in the maintenance of international peace, security and stability.

Mr. HERRENBURG (Suriname): The convening of the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly to consider one of the pressing concerns of our Organization - the critical economic situation in Africa - is undoubtedly one of the most significant decisions taken by the United Nations. To discuss among the nations of the world problems related to one of the continents is a decision which underscores the very raison d'être of the United Nations system: to contribute in a comprehensive and peaceful manner to the development of mankind.

(Mr. Herrenberg, Suriname)

I should like, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Suriname and on my own behalf, to extend to His Excellency, Mr. de Piniés, our heartiest congratulations on his election as President of this special session of the General Assembly. My delegation is convinced that under his experienced leadership this historic session will arrive at solutions that will satisfy the expectations of the peoples of Africa and the rest of the world.

The crisis in Africa concerns all of us, and finding solutions to it will actually result in the creation by the international community of a new mechanism to deal effectively in this interdependent world with problems of under-development, which, if left unsolved, will pose a serious threat to peace and stability in the world. For this reason, it is essential that the United Nations be strengthened in order to create the necessary conditions for international co-operation for development between States and regions.

We all share the opinion that the situation in Africa is serious in nature and that it poses a threat not only to the peoples of Africa but also to the peace and security of the entire world. We cannot ignore the fact that both internal and external factors in the past have contributed to the present situation. It is evident that the international community can and must react favourably to the endeavours of the African peoples in order to prevent a recurrence of tragic scenes of hunger and famine. Many unpredictable disasters in the form of persistent drought, desertification and other natural calamities have considerably exacerbated their already precarious pattern of life.

We deeply sympathize with the plight of our brothers in Africa. As members know, an important part of our population has its roots in Western Africa. After

(Mr. Herrenberg, Suriname)

our independence in 1975, but in particular after the start of the revolution in February 1980, relations between Suriname and many countries of the African continent became closer and closer and have now blossomed.

One of the many reasons for our presence here is that the issues we have to deal with also have relevance for our continent, the Caribbean and Latin America.

Our country, Suriname, is part of the developing world with a colonial past. We are therefore in a position to appreciate and fully concur with the views of the African leaders that coping with the present crisis in their continent in fact means to transform their respective societies from a dependent import-oriented economy with a small productive basis into a diversified nationally controlled export-oriented economy.

My delegation is of the opinion that the solution of world problems and the improvement in the standards of living of the unfortunate should and could be achieved through international co-operation. This has been proposed by the leaders of the African continent in their Priority Programme for 1986-1990.

(Mr. Herrenberg, Suriname)

My delegation has carefully studied the Priority Programme. We fully support the plan of action suggested by the Governments of Africa and call upon the international community to fill the gap in resources needed to finance the Priority Programme. It undoubtedly reflects the commitment of the African Governments to solve the crisis when they stress their willingness to contribute 64.4 per cent, or \$US 82.5 billion, to the financing of the recovery programme. This emphasizes their position that the African peoples themselves will be primarily responsible for the social and economic changes of their continent.

What Africa expects from the world community was eloquently stated as follows by President Abdou Diouf of the Republic of Senegal, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU):

(Spoke in French)

"Lastly, it is an act of faith by the whole international community in the spirit of solidarity, interdependence and international co-operation which remains the solid foundation of the United Nations.

...

"From the very outset I would express the fervent hope that the results of our work will translate this act of faith into well-defined, concrete and manageable measures." (A/S-13/PV.1, pp. 14-15 and 16)

(Continued in English)

We fully agree with the leaders of the African continent that development should have its base in the agricultural sector and an industrialization based thereupon.

In that respect, I may point out the philosophy of the Head of Government of my country, Commander Desiré Bouterse, which is persistently emphasized and incorporated in the economic paragraph of our policy programme. It is that our

(Mr. Herrenberg, Suriname)

economy should be diversified and the agricultural sector developed in order to enable us to feed ourselves and transform our economy from an import-oriented to an export-oriented one.

It is our opinion that merely contributing to the financial resources of the Priority Programme will not solve Africa's economic crisis. It is clear that the international community has to deal with the problems of international recession, the collapse of commodity prices, adverse terms of trade, the decline of official development aid, increased protectionism, high interest rates and, most importantly, the heavy burden of debt and debt-servicing obligations of African countries.

We therefore fully agreed with Mr. Narayanan, Minister of State for External Affairs of the Republic of India, when he said on behalf of his Government and the Non-Aligned Movement in his statement on Tuesday:

"Improvement of the external environment and structural changes in the global economic system are, therefore, essential for tackling the critical economic situation in Africa". (A/S-13/PV.1, pp. 54-55)

Turning to Africa's debt problem, I may state that many African countries are simply unable to repay their debts. The debtor countries are trying to appear solvent by rescheduling or refinancing their debt, but in fact some of the current debts of the developing countries should be regarded as in default. Debtor countries themselves are anxious to meet their commitments. The preservation of credit-worthiness is central to continued capital inflows. However, no country enjoys having to undergo the close and detailed scrutiny required as part of debt rescheduling. This system often threatens to paralyse economic growth, erode democratization, upset social peace and destabilize the international financial



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system. It is obvious that the responsibility lies equally with the debtor countries, the creditor countries, private banking and international institutions.

If the problem of debt and debt-servicing is not solved adequately, it will be impossible for the African countries to accumulate the financial resources which are needed for their financial contribution to the Priority Programme. In this context, we welcome the statements made by the representatives of Canada and the Nordic countries, which have proposed measures to alleviate the debt burden of the African countries.

The Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries has adopted a Plan of Action for Africa, focused on the food and agricultural sector, which is designed to supplement other international programmes operating in the same field.

We consider it to be of the greatest importance to support the activities which have been undertaken by the developing countries to promote South-South co-operation. Trade possibilities on regional and subregional levels can contribute to lessening dependence on the industrialized countries.

Although the Government of Suriname is not in a position to make financial contributions at this time, for reasons well known to everyone here, we have every intention of making an important contribution to the extent possible within the context of South-South co-operation. There are areas, for instance in agriculture, where we have expertise and stand ready to co-operate. In addition, the Government of Suriname has scheduled an international conference of non-aligned countries in July 1986, which will focus on the conditions necessary as a basis for development in the developing countries. This conference will be preceded by a national conference in June 1986, which will discuss the same topic.

The problems of Africa have much in common with the problems of the rest of the developing world. Therefore, the international community, in dealing with the

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critical economic situation in Africa, faces the challenge of finding structural solutions to the questions of the growth and development of the developing world. By the taking of the necessary measures to overcome the problems of Africa, a mechanism will be created to deal effectively with underdevelopment. It is now up to the international community to demonstrate that the ideals of equitable international development and human solidarity are not a mere facade but essential elements in creating a more equitable world.

We all know that there are certain regions in the world with an excessive food production and others where food production falls unacceptably short - the latter resulting in malnutrition and even famine. Yet we are all convinced that the world community has the capacity and technology to solve the food problems of the entire world. Let us therefore act now in the spirit of co-operation to ban this scourge for ever from the face of the earth.

In our opinion, an international economic order that would assure the African States better prices for their commodities would contribute significantly to the improvement of their economic situation. Therefore, my delegation holds the view that the establishment of the new international economic order is also necessary for the attainment of the maximum success of the efforts taken by the international community.

One cannot discuss the economic crisis in Africa without mentioning the apartheid system and the destabilizing activities by the South African racist régime against neighbouring States. In this connection, my Government strongly condemns the recent acts of aggression by South Africa against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in which alleged illegal activities of the African National Congress in those countries were used as a pretext.

(Mr. Herrenberg, Suriname)

Those brutal attacks on the three independent front-line States constitute a threat to peace and a blatant violation of international law. My delegation once more expresses its full support for and solidarity with the liberation movements in southern Africa. In the light of those wanton acts we call upon the international community not to delay further the application of sanctions against the racist régime of Pretoria.

In conclusion, we reiterate our full support for the Governments and peoples of Africa in the implementation of the Priority Programme.

Mr. TALALLA (Malaysia): Africa is a major crucible of life - the root of many ancient civilizations and cultures and the origin and home of many proud peoples, whose prominent sons and daughters are well represented today in this plenary Assembly.

Africa has had its share of proud moments in the pages of history, from ancient times to the more recent past.

Africa has also had its share of tragedies - witness the calamity of recent years when severe drought conditions affected many countries in the Sudano-Sahelian region, causing widespread famine and death.

It was, in part, the tremendous outpouring of help by fellow human beings from all parts of the world that helped provide relief from hunger and disease. But, more important, as evidenced in many of the affected countries, it was the hard work and resilience of the African people themselves that helped those countries through a most difficult period.

Perhaps, in retrospect, the thousands who died as a result of starvation did not die in vain, for their death helped to jolt the world and the international community into focusing on the severe structural deficiencies afflicting the economies of many of the African countries. The repeated warnings of the approaching calamity, which had been ignored, finally caught the world's attention

(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

with vivid images of the sick and dying - victims of a world grown complacent and people preoccupied with the seemingly more urgent pressures of a world in recession. The painful visions of dying infants and under-nourished mothers and elders flashed to living rooms throughout the world effectively reminded us of the cost of neglect and complacency.

It was at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly that the international community renewed its focus on the many serious problems in Africa by adopting the 1984 Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa. And at the fortieth session the international community agreed to the convening of this special session to focus on the rehabilitation and restoration of the African economies and to examine their medium- and long-term development problems.

My delegation therefore regards the convening of this special session as having particular significance. It is an acknowledgement that whatever happens on the African continent cannot be isolated or ignored by the international community; that the welfare and well-being of the African peoples are inextricably tied to the total well-being of the rest of the world.

This special session must be an expression of the solidarity of the international community, showing that in times of crisis Member States can set aside their many differences to address the immediate and basic problems confronting Africa.

Much hard work has been put in, particularly by the African countries themselves, in preparing for this session. We commend the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for providing the leadership and crystallizing a common view of what besets the economies on the continent and for its ability to galvanize the collective will of its many member States to produce the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980, the joint Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU at

(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

Addis Ababa in 1985 and agreement on the Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, also adopted in 1985.

The African countries have reaffirmed that, while requiring help from friends, they will depend primarily upon themselves for the basic and important task of rehabilitation and recovery. They have acknowledged that failures in implementing economic programmes in the past may have been a result of trying to transpose an alien system not compatible with the realities and requirements of Africa - an experience many of us, as developing countries, have had, to our cost. We therefore commend the spirit and intention of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Heads of State and Government of the OAU for their determination to realize common objectives in seeking a path to recovery.

My Government fully supports the Priority Programme outlined in the Addis Ababa Declaration. Malaysia supports the accelerated implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the priority given to the improvement of the food and agricultural situation in Africa and the relief of the external debt burden, the proposal to work on a common platform for action at the subregional, regional, continental and international levels and the reference to the need for action against the effects of South Africa's policy of destabilization on the economies of the States of southern Africa.

Malaysia also reiterates its support for the OAU's call for an international conference on the foreign debts of African countries and an international conference on sanctions against South Africa.

Malaysia has assisted its friends on the continent to the extent of its capability. Assistance has been channelled through the Malaysian Technical Co-operation Programme, as a small contribution to Africa's development efforts. Although Malaysia's assistance has been modest, Malaysia will continue to give it,

(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

through bilateral channels and within the context of South-South co-operation, believing that co-operation between developing countries is essential.

So far, Malaysia's co-operation with our friends in Africa has been in the areas of agriculture and in human resources development, two of the six priority areas requiring action, as identified by the Secretary-General in his report (A/40/372).

(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

In a note on some issues in international economic co-operation dated 2 April 1986, the Secretariat pointed out that, if the African countries are to achieve adjustment with growth and prevent the recurrence of such emergency situations as the famine experienced recently, the African countries will have to focus on the rehabilitation of their agricultural sectors. There are areas in which our experiences, particularly in the field of agriculture, can usefully be shared. Co-operation in agricultural research and training in agricultural extension services are therefore areas that can be expanded further.

Malaysia would also be able to share its experiences in the development of small- and medium-scale industries that might be of relevance in the rehabilitation of the industrial sectors of the countries affected.

If the African countries are to achieve adjustment with growth, increased resource flows, particularly at concessional rates, will have to be made available. These can only come from donor countries and from such multilateral financial institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

At the fortieth session of the General Assembly last autumn my delegation voiced its support for the OAU proposal to convene an international conference on African debt. We share the view that many of the sub-Saharan countries cannot possibly repay their existing debts as scheduled. The massive debt repayments cannot be effected when export earnings are depleted as a result of severely depressed commodity prices. The proposed international conference could contribute to a solution regarding the interrelationship between debt repayments and export earnings.

The tremendous response of many countries to the appeals for emergency assistance to the African countries recently affected by drought and famine is perhaps a precursor of what the members of the international community, acting together with co-operation and determination, can achieve. We commend the Office

(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

of Emergency Operations for Africa for its success in the monumental task of channelling humanitarian assistance to the countries affected, thus contributing to the saving of thousands of lives.

Equally important are the quiet actors, the experts and technicians in the specialized agencies, in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as others, who have worked and are working without fanfare to fight the threat of ecological imbalance, to provide sufficient food for the people on the continent and to maintain the health care needed to sustain the old and to nurture the young in order to ensure that Africa can overcome its many adversities.

Special mention must be made of the ongoing battle to contain the creeping desert, a battle that is of major importance in the efforts to rehabilitate and develop a viable agricultural sector in the countries affected. Although much has been done to combat desertification and to fight drought, more needs to be done and can be done in this area.

The response of donor countries, large and small, of non-governmental organizations and of private citizens during the recent crisis has reminded us of what real international co-operation can achieve in overcoming a calamity or tragedy. Perhaps the most significant thing to emerge from recent experience is that spirit of oneness, the realization that we share this world, that the plight of Africa should be a shared plight, that underdevelopment and an insufficient infrastructure perpetuate the cycle of economic dependency, which must be broken, and that poverty and undernourishment are an affront to the affluence and progress made thus far. These are problems that should rightly be shared and addressed by the international community in order that a large number of our fellow inhabitants of the earth can be helped to overcome their plight.



(Mr. Talalla, Malaysia)

This, to me, is the most important expectation of the special session. The international community with this opportunity is being provided to show its solidarity, to epitomize the spirit of what the United Nations really means. We are confident that with this awareness the special session will conclude successfully with a decision on an action programme to secure the development process needed to enable the African countries to contribute their share to the total development process of the international community.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Trinidad and Tobago): The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased that Ambassador Jaime de Piniés of Spain is presiding over this special session of the United Nations General Assembly convened to address the critical economic situation in Africa. We are sure that, with the experience, skill and wisdom he so amply demonstrated in the course of the fortieth session of the Assembly, he will guide our work to a successful conclusion.

The General Assembly has agreed to meet in special session to address for the first time the economic problems of a particular continent, Africa. Africa, rich in history and culture and well endowed with resources, has been beset by an amalgam of climatic and ecological, as well as domestic and external, forces that have left it largely impoverished and nullified more than a generation of development.

The focus on Africa at this time is a response to a situation that has reached crisis proportions, a situation that demands immediate action in addressing three important facets of the problem: first, the alleviation of the starvation and suffering facing so many of our fellow men in that continent; secondly, is the formulation of a strategy for long-term development in which international action supplements domestic policies; and, thirdly, the learning process in which the experiences of Africa serve to reinforce the principles of development as they apply to other developing countries.

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

The situation in Africa provides a unique opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its solidarity with fellow inhabitants of our planet by tackling the various problems in a concerted manner. It should be recognized that an economically weak and vulnerable Africa is in the interest of no one, and that the suffering of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa is our suffering also. This special session should demonstrate in a concrete way the validity and relevance of the United Nations as it acts in unison as the conscience and voice of humanity in time of crisis. My delegation would recall that our Organization was founded to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

My delegation has listened to the statements of representatives of African countries, including that of the President of the Republic of Senegal, and we are convinced that Africa has not lost hope; nor has its resolve to attain self-sustaining growth and development been shaken by this crisis. My delegation commends the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which establishes a framework for Africa's development to the year 1990. This is a more than commendable effort, and we support the thrust of the document.

We have noted that African Governments have assumed responsibility for their situation and for their future development. Trinidad and Tobago agrees that in the final analysis it is the African Governments themselves which must determine their own priorities, economic strategy and pace of growth.

My delegation also supports the document's focus on the key sectors of food and agriculture. We are of the view that Africa's ability to feed itself is crucial to that continent, which is generally regarded as having tremendous agricultural potential. The revitalization of the food and agriculture sectors in Africa will not only terminate the continent's dependence on imported food, but

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

but also assist in reversing the decline of nutritional standards in several sub-Saharan African countries. We are of the view that this focus should also support efforts which would accelerate the industrial capacity of Africa, especially in areas related to the development of agriculture. Other programmes of action have already addressed those concerns, and they too should be given adequate support and attention.

While African Governments have assumed the responsibility of mobilizing a substantial portion of their resources to alleviate the critical situation, the responsibility of the international community, and in particular the donor countries, is clear. There is need for a greater and more timely flow of better quality resources. The donor community and the multilateral financial institutions should, in keeping with their stated aims, closely co-ordinate their assistance to avoid competition, overlap and wastage.

Many sub-Saharan African Governments have demonstrated a willingness to undertake the necessary structural and sectoral reforms and institutional measures to revitalize their economic processes and make them more dynamic. These efforts need to be strengthened and reinforced by adequate external financial resources and technical assistance.

Africa, for all its travail, will remain in a vicious circle of underdevelopment unless there are efforts at the international level to solve the problem of the external debt of developing countries, to address low commodity prices and declining real official development assistance, and to stem the rising tide of protectionism. It is the conviction of Africa, as indeed it is the conviction of all developing countries, that an equitable international environment should be created in which opportunities exist for all participants.

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

It is incontrovertible that the problem of development is inextricably linked to the attainment of peace. The continued unbridled attacks by South Africa against neighbouring States in its attempt to destabilize the economies and political stability of those States amply demonstrates that fact. It is therefore imperative that the economic well-being of Africa, and southern Africa in particular, be viewed in the context of the need to terminate the illegal plunder of Namibia's human and natural resources and the illegal occupation of that Territory, to eradicate completely the odious system of apartheid and to establish a truly democratic, non-racial society in South Africa. At this time in its history, Africa must be allowed to channel all its energies into the dual task of survival and development; it must not be diverted by the existence and machinations of the odious system of apartheid.

The African crisis is still with us, and it is imperative that we find a long-term solution. The international community, which has responded in an unprecedented way to the spectre of starving millions, must ensure that the seeds of crisis are not sown again. In a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent every day, the misfortunes of Africa are bound to affect the rest of humanity. For make no mistake: the rest of the developing world stands perilously close to the threshold of the situation which has befallen Africa. Unless we take heed, other regions of the world will soon face similar - if not worse - crises. It is imperative, therefore, that we devise a solution which stops the immediate suffering and offers real hope for significant development in Africa as well as throughout the developing world.

Trinidad and Tobago for its part has long and enduring ties of consanguinity with Africa, and we stand ready, as in the past, within the limits of our resources, to render both material and moral support. My delegation also looks

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

forward to a successful outcome of this special session, an outcome that is both action-oriented and concrete and will return Africa to the path of growth and development. Trinidad and Tobago remains optimistic that goodwill will prevail, since, like many other members of the international community, we believe that development is another name for peace.

Mr. CHARLES (Haiti) (interpretation from French): The convening of this special session bears witness to the interest of the international community in Africa, which is passing through one of the most critical times in its history. Today the Organization is engaging in a comprehensive examination of the various problems confronting African countries, and has an opportunity to reaffirm its solidarity with them and to show that the world is one and that whatever affects one part of the world has repercussions throughout the planet.

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

It is also an opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose humanist vision of the problems of the world has always inspired the actions he has undertaken. We are grateful to him for having shown once again how highly competent he is in carrying out his mission, and also for not sparing any effort to make the international community fully aware of the scope of the tragedy which, with the haunting spectre of famine, shook the conscience of the world. The many and complex elements of this tragedy have been identified and clearly highlighted, ranging from vestiges from the colonial past to the low level of savings and national investment. With a few exceptions, the overall assessment is negative. The list of causes is well known: drought, desertification, famine, inappropriate economic policies, the drop in commodity prices, exchange rate fluctuations, foreign indebtedness and high interest rates, not to mention acts of destabilization in southern Africa perpetrated by the apartheid régime.

In some cases, the urgent situation has somewhat relaxed. Nevertheless, there are still structural weaknesses throughout the continent and any long-term solution must deal with them. It is comforting in this respect to stress that Africa has itself realized the dimension of the problems and has demonstrated, without reservation, its political intention and collective will to contribute within its means to the solution of these problems.

During their recent Summit meeting the members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) declared solemnly as follows: "We have determined to take specific measures, individually and collectively, for the economic development of our continent, in unity and solidarity with the African peoples and member States."

It was this spirit which guided the African Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Planning and Economic Development, subsequent to a very frank analysis of the economic situation, to draw up an economic development plan for the five-year

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

period 1986-1990, entitled "Priority Programme for Economic Recovery", which calls for the integration of African economies and which, once implemented, will lead to a considerable increase in trade between the various regions and subregions of the African continent.

The statements we have heard so far have clearly shown that the international community, which has already manifested its solidarity with Africa, will contribute fully to the implementation of the Priority Programme. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge because supporting a continent-wide development programme implies the transfer of tremendous resources. But it is also an opportunity precisely because rapidly developing African economies would provide assured stable markets and contribute to expanding international trade. Moreover, this would make an excellent contribution to international peace and security.

A satisfactory arrangement with regard to the debt problem would make an equally important contribution to the Priority Programme. In this connection we hail the decision of the Canadian Government to grant a moratorium on the repayment of loans granted to African countries for a period of five years. This moratorium could be renewed in five-year periods up until the year 2000. We fervently hope that this example will be followed by others. Similarly, we support the proposal for the convening of an international conference on the debt problem.

Lastly, it is also desirable for the international community, and particularly the developed countries, to agree on exerting pressure on South Africa with a view to the total uprooting of apartheid and achieving independence for Namibia. If the Priority Programme is to succeed in southern Africa, it is vital for the countries of the region to be able to devote all their efforts to development and not to concerns for their own defence.

The people of Haiti feel very close to Africa. Hence we could not remain indifferent, let alone insensitive to anything affecting Africa and of concern to

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Africa. Our visceral links with our Alma Mater defy time and space. By one of those coincidences only history can explain, the same symptoms of crisis which can be seen in Africa are also reflected in the conditions in Haiti. Thus, it is with the deepest interest that Haiti is following this new experience in international co-operation, which is a genuine step forward. I am firmly convinced that this effort will be successful if the mobilization of all this goodwill on the part of all does not come up against current frustrating obstacles. The dialogue must be frank and full and the parties concerned must, in the implementation of the programme, work together in pooling their expertise and resources so that they can avoid duplication and unjustified preferences in the choice of experts or implementing agents - in other words, any wasting of energy or loss of interest. Any false step could be very costly. The golden rule must be the profitability of a project and its ramifications throughout the economy. The rate of reimbursement of debt should be decided in such a way that it does not constitute an impediment to development.

Under these circumstances, the action of the international community through multilateral institutions and development assistance will support or perhaps even accelerate the priorities and trends the Governments of the continent have already chosen. That is the price of success. We fervently hope for success for Africa and for mankind as a whole.

Mr. KNIPPING-VICTORIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): This historic special session of the General Assembly began on a very auspicious note indeed because of the calibre of the President we have elected to preside over our work. There can be no doubt that his well-known commitment to co-operation amongst nations will guide our deliberations in the direction of a concerted approach resplendent in solidarity on behalf of our African brothers and sisters.



(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,  
Dominican Republic)

This is the first time the United Nations has devoted itself to an in-depth examination of the economic situation of an entire region of our planet; hence the historic dimension being attributed to this special session. It is only natural for the full attention of the international community now to be focused on what we do here; it is obvious that the good name of the Organization will in large measure depend on the way in which, and how effectively, it handles this issue.

The economic situation prevailing in Africa is truly alarming. Such is the magnitude of the crisis that it is a true imperative of our time that we must devise appropriate and timely policies of co-operation that encourage efforts at development designed by African countries themselves.

The root causes of the current crisis are varied. Some, indeed, are domestic; others originate abroad. Similarly, there are natural factors and others that derive from the current structuring of the international economic order. There are the disastrous effects of persistent drought, which has given rise to the degradation and loss of soil for agriculture, the destruction of ground cover, the desertification of pasture land, the depletion of subterranean waters, deforestation, the massive displacement of people and disruption of the continent's ecology. To all those problems must be added the decline in the prices of basic exports, growing protectionism in industrialized countries, the enormous weight of external indebtedness and the rise in interest rates. The combination of natural disaster and an adverse international economic situation has deepened Africa's crisis, rendering more acute social problems concerning food, agriculture, transportation, energy, nutrition, water and other matters of equally fundamental significance for the survival of the human race.

As we said at the thirty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly, in November 1984, when agenda item 139 was being considered, it pains us to note that

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at the very time that we are examining the critical situation in Africa mankind sees great strides being taken and progress that might be called stupendous being made in the realms of science and technology, transportation and communications, industry and space research, medicine and health, and so forth. It is a very troubling situation with which international life confronts us, a series of contradictions very difficult to grasp and assimilate. Those contradictions are manifest in all areas and most obvious in the ever widening gap separating the rich countries from the poor developing countries and the threat looming over millions who face hunger despite all the scientific and material progress. Oh, the sad paradox of our times.

This disturbing reality should prompt us to stop and think about the moral and sociological foundations upon which the current structure of international life rests.

Turning now to the critical economic situation in Africa, we should like to emphasize the shining example our African brothers and sisters have given us as they have co-ordinated actions throughout an entire region to surmount the crisis. With regard to these concerted efforts to come to grips with matters of common interest, we should stress the realism with which African Governments have faced the full dimensions of the crisis and envisaged means of overcoming it. The willingness to engage in self-criticism that has governed their conceptual analysis has convinced them of the absolute necessity of fundamental substantive reforms in basic institutional structures throughout the juridical, social and political order. Equally admirable is their recognition of their inability to cope with their current problems by themselves. We note in all sectors and fields in Africa the need for a change in direction and a new way of setting priorities. During the course of the debate, we have been able to see how the international community has

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Dominican Republic)

been offering its co-operation to African countries. Most countries have announced generous and praiseworthy support aimed at easing the want and suffering of millions of human beings. A variety of multilateral organizations - private, non-governmental, governmental and international - have also manifested their willingness to help, including international organizations within the United Nations system. This entire splendid crusade of international assistance clearly shows the profound sense of solidarity inherent in the human race.

My delegation considers that this special session, which has served to demonstrate to the world the extraordinary sense of solidarity present among our peoples, should give rise to renewed impetus for multilateral mobilization to solve the problems afflicting humanity. The United Nations, the proudest embodiment of the organized international community, should play a fundamental role. This would revitalize the purposes and principles that inspired the founders of the Organization as they established international machinery designed to promote the economic and social progress of all peoples through international co-operation to resolve international problems in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

In other words, the United Nations should co-ordinate and supervise implementation of the Programme of Action and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, which we hope and expect will be adopted at this special session - without, of course, giving short shrift to the sovereign rights and freedoms of African countries, which in the final analysis are the only ones that can decide their own destiny.

(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,  
Dominican Republic)

The Dominican Republic, identifying fully with the yearnings of our African brothers and sisters, will enthusiastically back any initiative our Organization might adopt for the benefit of the African continent. In this ever more interdependent world in which we live, solidarity with Africa in turn means solidarity with the future of mankind. By the same token, Africa's economic recovery will make an inestimable contribution to world peace inasmuch as there can be no peace without development and social justice.

Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, I should like to congratulate Ambassador de Piniés on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly.

Ecuador has come to the rostrum of the world to voice its solidarity with our brother peoples of Africa on this occasion when, in the light of the critical situation facing that continent, their most authoritative spokesmen have come before the appropriate forum, the United Nations, not only to raise a grave problem but also to call attention to its ramifications for the entire international community.

Above and beyond its agonizing undertones of tragic human sacrifice and suffering, the problem deserves a quantification of effort and support in terms of world-wide co-operation, which in turn would open the door to an assessment of the other dimensions of inadequacies and their solutions in other parts of the developing world. We are thus updating, for the period beyond this crisis, the prospects for North-South action, which must necessarily begin where the need is most urgent, that is Africa.

In this respect, we should recall the watchword of the International Labour Organisation to the effect that want anywhere in the world is a threat to prosperity everywhere else in the world.

As has quite rightly been said by representatives from all parts of the world, the solution lies in urgent attention being paid to the critical situation facing us and to promoting development. The primary goal of the United Nations and a concept that arose in the multilateral world of the past 40 years, development must be achieved with full national and international justice. For this purpose the machinery of the United Nations system, to which the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, referred in his opening remarks, should be made to identify - something it is indeed already doing - situations and areas where action is required.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

It is obvious that there is a clear link between disarmament and development. The United Nations must make progress in this area, and bring about the financing with dignity of the better life to which peoples the world over are entitled. Hence all that is required at this time - particularly in the case of Africa - is responsible political determination by the major countries that have the capacity to play a leading role in these trying times, a role which must not fail to include a dimension of historical balance and reparation marking the advent in our day of universal values of freedom, democracy and the interdependence of peoples. The voice of experience and analysis of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jaime de Piniés has been a beacon for us along these lines.

As the President of Senegal and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Abdou Diouf, pointed out, this grave situation calls for a new proposal for Africa and a more appropriate framework for international co-operation. This special session of the General Assembly - the first clearly to come to grips with an economic crisis in a major part of the planet - has before it the report submitted by the OAU specifically underscoring the need as soon as possible to initiate fundamental structural reform pinpointing the priorities to be followed in the development process of the African countries.

Who better than the African countries themselves could know and duly interpret their own reality and the ways for resolving the serious problems facing them?

With realism and validity, the main conclusions of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery point in the same direction. My delegation joins those who have spoken words of encouragement and incentive, particularly with regard to the imperative need to make progress in modernizing agriculture and substantially increasing output and productivity in order to meet the urgent nutritional needs of the people and to rehabilitate the rural areas of this vast continent.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

The fundamental problems have been identified. But the agricultural sector has been recognized as the urgent, priority aspect of the African tragedy that must be addressed within its rural process of development, as we seek to help Africa help itself - something that has been repeatedly stated in this Hall. The extensive programmes of technology transfers and technical assistance efficiently co-ordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and those promoting development through United Nations bodies specialized in granting loans and revolving credit, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) must furnish significant contributions towards this vast collective undertaking of the international community on behalf of Africa and should channel and co-ordinate the international aid effort.

A strong appeal should also be made for the lifting of the bilateral series of restrictions and limitations that are hamstringing international trade and that stand in the way of just prices for commodities and raw materials. Free flow and broad latitude for trade amongst nations, together with international co-operation, are the best tools for promoting the development of peoples, since it is necessary to deal with the very roots of the problem they share with other parts of the world.

With a spirit of frankness, solidarity and understanding with regard to the grave crisis the countries of Africa are facing, Ecuador resolutely backs this great endeavour of the international community on behalf of Africa and those steps the world Organization will take to promote development in Africa. In this context Ecuador's categoric repudiation of racism, colonialism and the loathsome policy of apartheid - which have undermined the peaceful and orderly process of development - is well known. A few days ago Ecuador became one of the first 43 countries to subscribe to the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

There is a general sense at this historic session of the General Assembly that the time has come urgently for us to bear in mind the following: promoting Africa's development; the paramount role the African countries themselves ascribe to food and agriculture; the struggle against erosion and soil deterioration; afforestation; preserving the ecology and a variety of other factors - all of which represent commitments to self-sustaining action where the peoples, first and foremost, want to help themselves. That is why it is the responsibility of the other members of the international community to help them in this undertaking, thus adopting a stance truly in keeping with this, the hour of the peoples of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.