



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

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ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 September 1986, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. MORAN (Spain)
(Temporary President)

later: Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh)
(President)

- Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Spain
- Minute of silent prayer or meditation
- Address by the Temporary President
- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
- Credentials of representatives to the forty-first session of the General Assembly
 - (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee
- Election of the President of the General Assembly
- Address by Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

OPENING OF THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF SPAIN

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I declare open the forty-first session of the General Assembly.

ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also observe the International Day of Peace, on this third Tuesday of September, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/67, of 30 November 1981, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

This year the International Day of Peace holds particular significance as people throughout the world join together in marking the International Year of Peace. During this year the peoples of the world have demonstrated their growing concern for, and commitment to, peace, and the United Nations has continued to serve, in accordance with its Charter, as a centre for harmonizing efforts for peace. Today more people than ever before are joining us in reflecting for a moment on the meaning of peace in the world of today.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

ADDRESS BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): In accordance with tradition, as Temporary President I wish to offer a few brief thoughts as an introduction to this forty-first session of the General Assembly.

First, I thank all Member States for the honour conferred on my country by the election of Ambassador Jaime de Piniés as President of the General Assembly for its fortieth session. The session that ended yesterday was an event of great significance in the life of this Organization. On the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations we witnessed the largest concentration of Heads of State, Heads of Government and special envoys in the Organization's history. That fact underlined the importance that all States attach to the United Nations and its exceptional role as an international forum for meeting and for dialogue.

The fortieth anniversary was also an opportunity seriously to consider and assess the achievements and shortcomings of the Organization. Although we cannot ignore its present shortcomings and defects, as reflected in the anniversary session by the fact that it was impossible to reach agreement on a final declaration, the need for the United Nations has been reaffirmed.

(The Temporary President)

A review of the work accomplished by the Organization underlined the achievement of positive final results in many areas: the absence of any widespread conflict; the overcoming or lessening of crises; the work undertaken by the United Nations peace-keeping forces; the progress in the area of human rights marked by the milestones of the Universal Declaration of 1948 and the two 1966 Covenants; the aid to refugees through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); the great historic event of decolonization that has given the Organization its present universal character; the assistance given the social and economic development of peoples; the codification of international law; co-operation through specialized agencies in the fields of health, education, transport, telecommunications and so on and, lastly, the pinpointing and assessment of problems with worldwide implications.

During the fortieth session of the General Assembly we also witnessed such important events as the special session on the critical economic situation in Africa held in May of this year, the adoption by consensus by both the General Assembly and the Security Council of a resolution condemning terrorism in all its forms and another calling for the convening in 1987 of an international conference to combat narcotics. During the course of the fortieth session, we also saw the resumption of dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States, with a meeting between the highest-ranking leaders of those countries in November after an interruption of several years.

All those positive developments should not conceal the difficult period through which the international community and our Organization itself are now going, which makes it more than ever necessary that the forthcoming session of the General Assembly make energetic efforts aimed at recovery.

(The Temporary President)

There is widespread stagnation in the international situation. The promising signs of détente between the super-Powers are accompanied by signs of a hesitancy that is apparently difficult to overcome. We have not witnessed any substantial progress in the main areas of conflict or friction: the Middle East, Iran-Iraq, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Central America, the Malvinas, the Sahara, Cyprus, Namibia. In many regions of the world human rights continue to be violated, and, despite the widespread protests of its population and worldwide condemnation, the Pretoria Government continues to maintain a régime based on the institutionalization of racial discrimination. The economic crisis, which has been alleviated in only a few countries, persists and continues to aggravate dramatically the debt problem of the developing countries, making it difficult for a number of those Governments to pursue policies of political democratization. The persistence of the crisis is hampering the essential task to which we are all committed, namely, of narrowing the economic inequalities that exist between countries. Lastly, terrorism is far from having been eradicated, as evidenced by recent events in Karachi, Istanbul or Paris.

More directly related to the United Nations, the critical situation of multilateralism, which reflects the lack of trust in multilateralism on the part of important sectors of world public opinion and finds its embodiment in the harsh reality of the financial crisis within the Organization, constitutes an additional challenge that requires from this Assembly concrete proof of skill, perseverance and imagination.

Notwithstanding all the problems I have mentioned, I am convinced that we will be equal to the task and that we shall achieve positive results by the conclusion of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. In order to do so, and without going into undue detail, I would venture to make the following suggestions:

(The Temporary President)

First, the Assembly should consider possible areas of international co-operation and should put aside unavoidable areas of confrontation; we should focus on expanding the areas of agreement and, where differences are concerned, we should not be content with mechanically reflecting international divisions; we should undertake the ambitious task of supporting and giving impetus to every available option in order to resolve such differences.

Secondly, the broadening of areas of convergence requires that we be modest and realistic, but it does not mean that we need abandon our desire for change in international relations. We should aspire to the achievement of gradual progress, whose limitations will be compensated by a solid international consensus. That consensus is sometimes interpreted as a hindrance to the possibility of an agreement, but if the necessary political will is present it can also be regarded as a genuine compromise between different visions on the part of Member States.

Thirdly, support for existing negotiating forums, such as the Contadora process in Central America and the diplomatic efforts of a Secretary-General of such professional skills as Mr. Perez de Cuellar in areas of conflict such as Iran and Iraq, Cyprus, the Sahara and Afghanistan, should prevail over unilateral attempts at condemnation that consist merely of words.

It is of enormous importance to all of us that the process of dialogue between the two super-Powers succeed in arriving at a comprehensive disarmament agreement in Geneva, which would be of the greatest historic relevance and which could make a fundamental contribution to the establishment of the climate of détente we all desire so much. The Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, the forerunner of the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe to be held this year at Vienna, is about to conclude its work, and I should also like to express my hope

(The Temporary President)

that this year will also witness another Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting that will bring the Geneva negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Fourthly, if there is one item that has attracted worldwide attention it is undoubtedly the events now occurring in South Africa, the rebellion of the black and coloured population against a system so intolerable and so violent to human dignity as apartheid. I am convinced that this session of the General Assembly will respond to the concerns of world public opinion and that it will choose to exert further pressure upon the Pretoria authorities for the prompt dismantling of the apartheid system. The fight against that system of racial discrimination in South Africa is undoubtedly the most vital of the priority tasks facing the Organization in the field of human rights, and I am convinced that it will this year continue to pursue it with renewed intensity.

Fifthly, the financial crisis of the Organization will undoubtedly take up a large part of our time in the forthcoming debates. Although here we are facing what is perhaps the most tangible evidence of the problems and difficulties facing our Organization, we must not forget that we have before us an exceptional opportunity to improve and reform an institution in a way that can greatly increase its effectiveness.

In order to achieve success in all the areas I have just mentioned - concentration on co-operation, widening of consensus, support for negotiating efforts, the fight against apartheid and for human rights, reform through the financial crisis - it is essential that we rely on the political will of all Member States. I can assure you that, as the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Spain said in his statement at the fortieth session of the General Assembly "the people and the Government of Spain will spare no efforts in this common enterprise," which

(The Temporary President)

is the United Nations (A/40/PV.10, p. 102). As evidence of our interest in the Organization, His Majesty Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, will speak in the general debate in the General Assembly next week.

It only remains for me to wish you all every success in your work.

ITEM 119 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/41/610, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that two Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter:

"A member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of this information?

It was so decided.

ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(a) APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the forty-first session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Bahamas, China, Fiji, Ghana, the Netherlands, Rwanda, Venezuela, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America.

(The Temporary President)

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly.

I should like to recall that in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President should be elected from an Asian State.

In this connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Asian States that the Group has endorsed the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury of Bangladesh for the presidency of the General Assembly.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of Annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury of Bangladesh elected President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly by acclamation.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury and I invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Choudhury took the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. HUMAYUN RASHEED CHOUDHURY, PRESIDENT OF THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The PRESIDENT: It was a time for celebration and also of sober reflection when we commemorated last year the fortieth anniversary of the

(The President)

establishment of the United Nations. Through its central theme, The United Nations for a Better World, the anniversary session eloquently expressed humankind's expectations from the world body.

The Charter of the United Nations, a product of the pangs of war, enshrined a noble vision. It was one that sought to create a world without war, a world without hunger, where humankind could live in peace and dignity. It was a radical departure from the norms of international relations we had known. It changed fundamentally the concept of how States should relate to one another. It broke fresh ground by collectively addressing, perhaps for the first time in the annals of man, the problems of hunger, malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. It made these a common, global concern.

It is this common concern for peace and progress that has brought all of us here together, as it has others before us in so many previous years. It is our earnest hope that this Assembly will contribute to the realization of the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter. I am deeply grateful for the signal honour that the Assembly has bestowed upon Bangladesh and upon me personally by electing me to preside over the Assembly's deliberations. I consider my election as a tribute to my country - a recognition of the role played by Bangladesh since its independence in upholding the lofty ideals of the United Nations and as an advocate of conciliation and co-operation in the pursuit of international peace and understanding. I assure the Assembly of my best efforts to live up to the trust it has reposed in me.

I should like at this point to pay a well-deserved tribute to my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Jaime de Pinies of Spain, who presided over the fortieth anniversary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations with such distinction. The competence, expertise and rich experience he brought to bear on the presidency has set a standard that I know will be hard for me to match.

(The President)

Since his assumption of office our distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has served this world body with great dedication and integrity. His contribution to the cause of international peace and security and to social and economic development has earned him the admiration of the entire international community. I know I can depend fully on his advice and support in the discharge of my responsibility as President of the present session of the Assembly.

Over the years the vision of the founders of this Organization has not been blurred either by the continuing conflict and tension in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Central America or by the denial of fundamental human rights to the millions in South Africa and Namibia by the racist Pretoria régime, and this very vision enjoins upon this Assembly the responsibility of taking a bold and decisive step here and now to put an end to the abhorrent system of apartheid and to find a just and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East and Palestine.

The poor and the deprived everywhere still look to the United Nations for help and support in their struggle against illiteracy, hunger and disease: in fact, the United Nations remains the only organization that enjoys the confidence of the world community and is capable of dealing with the vital questions of disarmament, human rights and the creation of an environment in which every nation, big or small, rich or poor, can pursue its national objectives in peace and security. There is also an increasing expectation that the United Nations system will involve itself more directly and effectively in addressing the new problems of drug abuse and terrorism in all its forms, which are assuming unprecedented proportions and causing death and misery to many all over the world.

I often wonder whether the failings and shortcomings of the United Nations are not at times exaggerated. It cannot be denied that the Organization has evolved over the years the capacity to respond to the needs and requirements of an

(The President)

increasingly complex and interdependent world. It has helped shape the world as we know it today by contributing to the process of decolonization and the promotion of international co-operation and through its emphasis on the global approach to problem-solving. New horizons and concerns have been brought to the fore by this Organization and mechanisms have been evolved to deal with the varied and intricate technological, scientific and international legal questions of our time.

A major contribution of this world body in the post-war period has been the promotion of multilateralism and international economic co-operation. The vital supportive role played by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other bodies in the economic and social development of many nations is recognized with deep appreciation. Coming as I do from Bangladesh, how can I ever forget the role of the United Nations relief operations in Bangladesh in the reconstruction of my country immediately following our emergence as an independent nation?

This session of the General Assembly has a crucial role to play in restoring confidence in the United Nations and in its ability to deal promptly and effectively with the various international issues and problems. In recent years there appears to have been a crisis of confidence in the United Nations itself. Perceptions and priorities concerning the role and purpose of the Organization, as well as the means to achieve its objectives, vary among its membership, which has grown in number and diversity over the years. Some of these problems have been with us for a long time and some others are of recent origin, but there is a general feeling that the United Nations today needs revitalizing in a number of aspects in order to bring it into line with the priorities of a changing world.

One area which will require the priority attention of the Assembly this year is the financial crisis being faced by the United Nations. If allowed to persist that crisis has the potential to cripple the Organization to a point beyond recovery. The question admittedly has several dimensions but I see no reason why,

(The President)

given our commitment to the United Nations, it should be difficult to come to a consensus. Undoubtedly there is scope to cut bureaucratic waste, to reorient expenditure to priority areas and generally to streamline the administration to make this world body more functional and cost-effective. The Secretary-General has already undertaken a number of steps in this respect, but much more needs to be done, much more should be done.

Let us address ourselves to this question in all earnestness to overcome the crisis during this very session. I offer my services in any manner that the Member States may find useful.

A matter of particular importance before this Assembly, also related to the financial crisis, is our responsibility to consider and act upon the report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations. The Group of 18 has made recommendations of wide-ranging character and implications. I beseech delegations to examine the recommendations thoroughly and to join in consensus action. It is my conviction that an overall increase in efficiency would further enhance the capacity of the United Nations to attain the purposes and implement the principles of the Charter, contributing to strengthening its effectiveness in dealing with political, economic and social issues. I would take this opportunity to commend the Group for its substantive work. I am positive that the Assembly, in taking action on the Group's report, will fully bear in mind that it has performed its work and presented recommendations on the basis of full respect for the principles and provisions of the Charter.

Given the importance of the subject and the keen interest displayed by Member States in this regard, it is my desire to take up the report early in the session so that adequate consideration may be given to it for timely action by this General Assembly session.

(The President)

No attempt at revitalizing the United Nations can succeed without strengthening the role of the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as the Office of the Secretary-General. Individually and collectively they serve as vital instruments of the world body in dealing with the problems of peace and security and economic and social development. There is, however, a feeling that in recent years the Security Council has been reduced to a mere debating body. To remove this impression we must devise practical means to enable it to act quickly and effectively in times of crisis.

(The President)

An important arm at the disposal of the Security Council is the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations. In the maintenance of peace and security around the globe, these forces are increasingly confirming their relevance and the justification for them. I am of the view that the peace-keeping operations should receive our whole-hearted support both conceptually and materially. I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to hundreds of blue helmets deployed around the world for their dedication, commitment and valiant sacrifices.

The General Assembly is the only forum in which all issues may be discussed by all countries of the world regardless of their size and importance. It is therefore extremely important that we should organize our work in a manner that ensures constructive, purposeful and coherent discussions on the issues aimed at achieving practical and implementable decisions. We should give serious thought to the reduction of the number, and possibly the length, of resolutions adopted by the Assembly. I should like further to suggest that we revive the proposal made on an earlier occasion that the President and the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Assembly should be selected by their respective regional groups before the conclusion of the work of the Assembly that precedes it.

We may also consider a reduction in the requirements of a quorum for the opening of meetings of the plenary and of the Main Committees to one fourth and one fifth, respectively, on the understanding that the presence of the majority would be required in order for any decision to be taken. Regrouping of items of a similar nature under a single heading, both in the General Assembly and in the Main Committees, and the elimination of those items from the agenda that are no longer relevant would enable us to utilize more fully the time available to a session. As is the case now with the Second Committee, biennialization of the Committee items could also be tried in other Main Committees, and possibly in the plenary. The

(The President)

time announced for the closure of the list of speakers should be strictly observed. There is also a need to keep the number of documents and their size to manageable limits. I intend to follow my predecessor's example in being punctual in starting the meetings both in the plenary and in the Committees.

I would urge this General Assembly to make a conscious effort to break with the past. Let us attempt to re-examine the way we conduct our business. No one has decreed that we must adopt several hundred resolutions at every General Assembly session, just as no one has decreed that we must generate mountains of paper every year which no one can possibly read, let alone absorb or act upon. Can we not make our general debates purposeful? Must we perpetuate a tendency to act as though the passage of a resolution absolves us of further responsibility for the subject in question?

The Secretary-General who theoretically has vast responsibility is in fact vested with limited practical authority or resources on which to draw. His considerable moral authority and unique position and stature can be used effectively to deal with many vital issues and problems. There is therefore a need to strengthen his role and functions. His office must increasingly serve as an early warning system.

The role of the Secretary-General as the co-ordinator of the United Nations common system, assumes particular importance in the context of the renewed interest in the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. The existing mechanism for co-ordination should be strengthened, or if necessary overhauled, to make it more effective.

Many of the greatest hopes of mankind centre on economic and social progress, which must remain a primary goal of the United Nations system. It is because of the United Nations that the world community today gives a high priority to

(The President)

development, which, in its simplest form, must mean giving an acceptable quality of life to all human beings living in this interdependent world.

There is no denying that for some time now the world economy has been functioning in an uneven and unsatisfactory way. We are facing economic changes of such magnitude and complexity that no country can adjust to them in isolation. It has become increasingly clear that economic, financial, monetary, trade and development issues are so interrelated and are of such profound political and social importance that they can be dealt with effectively only as part of the wider political process.

The world debt has serious implications for the survival of the developing countries and has become a major international concern. I believe that a solution to this should be sought on the basis of a far greater understanding of the development needs of developing countries and the creation of an international climate for their accelerated development.

Perhaps the broadest and most complex of the issues of our time which has an important bearing on the future is the question of human rights, which affects everyone. The advances made in the promotion and protection of human rights in the course of this century and particularly since the establishment of the United Nations have been unprecedented in human history. The new challenge that confronts the international community is to ensure that the norms which have been universally adopted should be observed everywhere in the world, and that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every individual should be respected in thought and in action.

Although the United Nations is primarily an organization of Governments, in the ultimate analysis it derives its mandate from the peoples of the world and its success depends ultimately on their support and the interest they take in its working.

(The President)

As we sit here at this moment amidst the glitter and glamour of New York, the hearts and thoughts of many of us are with our fellow compatriots in regions where poverty and deprivation mark everyday existence. It is the aspirations of these peoples that the United Nations embodies. Take for instance my own political constituency in Sylhet, located in a remote corner of Bangladesh. Time in some places there almost stands still. Not much sign of the twentieth century is to be seen, while the world hurtles towards the twenty-first.

Many of you have a similar story to tell. It is the hopes and expectations of the peoples we all represent here that are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. They all look upon the United Nations as the forum in which their representatives could echo their plaintive appeal, so that nations could listen and respond. It is to these peoples that non-governmental organizations and private voluntary institutions have turned their concentration and addressed their endeavours. We are all, therefore, deeply beholden to these organizations. Theirs is an edifying role that is deserving of praise.

(The President)

In today's world, frontiers of States are no longer defined by physical parameters alone. Interdependence among States has stretched their boundaries beyond geographical limits. This is particularly so in the case of the super-Powers. By their overwhelming economic, technological and military might, they have acquired a reach far beyond their geographical boundaries, making them virtual neighbours to every country in the world. The relations between the super-Powers affect us all and, therefore, assume especial significance. Global peace is predicated upon how they perceive one another and relate to one another. It is in our common interest to see that these mighty Powers do not engage in any conflict, directly or by proxy. I have no doubt that leaders of the super-Powers are sensitive of their responsibilities concerning the future of humankind. Let us assure them that we are with them in their search for peace and stability and, in turn, let us be assured of their support in our common endeavour to achieve freedom, security and development.

We must realize that our interdependence will demand greater international solidarity now and in the future. Today's global community, with the United Nations as its focal point, must make a concerted effort to move in that direction. The near universality of membership of the United Nations and the instrumentalities at its disposal make it the only organization capable of serving this role. It is my sincere hope that the current crisis that the Organization faces is only a passing phase.

The overriding interest of the international community in the preservation of the Organization should enable us all to work in concert and overcome the problems.

The twentieth century has seen unprecedented progress affecting every sphere of our life. Sadly, though, the progress has been uneven. Great strides have been made in science and technology with resultant advances in the material well-being of man. There has therefore been a greater ability to solve his worldly problems

(The President)

Yet doubts, misconceptions, prejudices, suspicion and narrow self-interest continue to bedevil peoples and nations in their relations to one another. The speed of progress has broken, in many cases, the harmony of development and social adjustment of generations, and humankind finds itself troubled by spiritual conflict.

In our pursuit of material progress, we may have been insensitive and impatient, greedy and selfish. Today old values and their relevance to new situations are being questioned. Wanton destruction of the natural environment and lack of concern for the less fortunate segments of humanity have the potential of jeopardizing all the material progress that we have harnessed for ourselves.

Progress would be meaningless and self-defeating should, in its quest, we lose our soul. We must not forget that the endowments which distinguish the human race from all other forms of life are summed up in what is known as the human spirit - the mind being its quintessential quality.

In this International Year of Peace, let us rededicate ourselves to working together for a world of peace, not only where war is merely absent, not only where human survival is just possible, but also where justice prevails and human dignity is upheld. Peace, which is indivisible, is undoubtedly the prime prerequisite for all of our endeavours.

Let the United Nations commence its journey towards the twenty-first century with a new sense of confidence and vitality.

Let the United Nations give humankind a clear direction towards the coming millenium.

Let the forty-first session strive for a better United Nations for a better world.

Imbued with this spirit, let us begin.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: As announced in the Journal, immediately following this plenary meeting we shall hold consecutive meetings of the Main Committees for the purpose of electing their Chairmen and thereafter the second plenary meeting will be convened for the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

