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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 24 September 1986, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh)

later: Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian SSR)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, President of Mexico
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Pires de Miranda (Portugal)
Mr. Wu Xueqian (China)
Mr. Chirac (France)
Mr. Teran Teran (Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. MIGUEL DE LA MADRID HURTADO, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the United Mexican States.

Mr. de la Madrid, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United Mexican States, His Excellency Mr. Miguel de la Madrid, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President de la MADRID (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by expressing on behalf of the people and Government of Mexico our profound gratitude to the international community for its prompt and generous assistance following the tragic earthquakes in our country last September. The people of Mexico will never forget such a clear demonstration of world-wide solidarity.

I should also like to express our sincere pleasure at your well-deserved election to lead the efforts of the General Assembly, and to make known Mexico's satisfaction at the skilful and effective role played by your predecessor, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, who guided the work of the General Assembly during its fortieth session.

I must also acknowledge the tenacious efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who throughout his mandate has shown clear-sightedness and political imagination in confronting the grave challenges of the international situation. His various initiatives are proof of his unshakeable commitment to peace and co-operation between States.

My presence before the General Assembly is meant to reassert Mexico's permanent commitment to the United Nations and its ideals. It is a commitment to the rule of law in international relations, the peaceful resolution of disputes and

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the search for democratic formulas permitting peaceful coexistence and co-operation between peoples, on a just and equitable basis.

A little more than four decades ago the hopes of mankind, then emerging from the bloodiest devastation it had ever endured, converged in the creation of a new international organization. Millions of people saw in the United Nations a unique opportunity to build an order among States that would promote progress and universal well-being within a framework of peace and security.

The international society of our day would not be the same without the presence of the United Nations. The fortieth anniversary of its founding provided a suitable occasion to take stock of the system.

The Organization has undoubtedly helped to deactivate and reduce international crises that might have degenerated into a catastrophe with irreversible consequences. Its promotion of the decolonization progress, which has changed the political map of our time, stands out as one of its fundamental achievements. The growth of a vast system of co-operation and pluralist discussion has led to a common awareness of the great issues that determine the life of nations.

Thanks to the formidable development of the multilateral system, we now know that, in spite of geographical, historical, cultural and political differences, we face common challenges that demand the combining of efforts and a new form of solidarity.

However, we are still far from attaining the goals of 1945. We now live in a world that is probably more dangerous and unstable, in which the political, military and technical predominance of a few has accentuated the inequality of nations.

The lifespan of our Organization has coincided with one of the most dynamic and changing periods in the history of man. Scientific discoveries and the

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technological revolution have transformed societies. Communications link us instantaneously, making us both witnesses of and participants in the most distant events. Today all men are truly modern. Unfortunately, this great technical capacity for communication has not always served to further understanding. All too often we know only the appearance of events and not their true significance. Mistrust, prejudice and uncertainty have not yet been banished from our midst.

The juridical equality of States was enshrined in the San Francisco Charter, but mechanisms were also established to give the victorious Powers particular responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In more ways than one the Charter brought together the ideals and pragmatism of a group of nations determined to prevent for ever a universal conflagration. However, some of them did not relinquish their prerogatives and influence.

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The international community was obliged to yield before the force of circumstances, but that responsibility, as reflected in the rights and obligations of the permanent members of the Security Council, must always be oriented and limited by the international legal order. The attributes of the permanent members are subject to law; they are not privileges without norms or limits. Rivalry - which was accompanied by a division of the world into zones of influence - soon led to confrontation and, as was to be expected, confrontation overstepped the bounds of law and succumbed to the frequent temptation to make indiscriminate use of force.

The community of nations, which involves an implied equality of rights and obligations, was distorted by a concentration of power around two main poles. That bipolarity was able to impose its demands: alignment and subordination became a normal part of international life. To be sure, certain periods of extreme tension have been followed by others where a glimmer of understanding was seen. The confrontation to which I am referring - whose true nature and menace is seen in the terrible nuclear arsenals which have been accumulated - has been one of the central problems in international relations during the last four decades.

Fortunately, the conflagration which could destroy us all has been so far avoided. Yet we are all subject to a threat the materialization of which would be irreversible. This confrontation has defined many aspects of contemporary life and has left its tragic stamp on the fate of many peoples and regions of the developing world.

The evolution of our Organization is a reflection of trends in world politics. The successes and failures, the virtues and deficiencies, of the United Nations are an expression of the degree of commitment of Member States to international law and multilateralism.

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Often, the Organization has been paralysed by a lack of political will on the part of some States, the very ones which, from the beginning, were entrusted with a primary responsibility for the settlement of disputes. Those States have preferred to create their own security systems, which, aside from undermining the main task of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace, have buttressed the existence of zones of hegemony.

The indiscriminate use of the right of veto has all too frequently kept the Security Council from fully achieving its aims, and has prevented that important body from speaking out on events and conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

At the same time we cannot deny that the multilateral system has faced clear difficulties over the past several years, some structural and some political. The extraordinary growth of the Organization in recent years has complicated its operation; its effectiveness has therefore been decreased. There is no doubt that strengthening the Organization requires changes to streamline its activities and, above all, to facilitate implementation. That would enable us to restore its legitimacy, and even, for some, its credibility.

To the Organization's administrative difficulties have now been added the financial problems which are largely the result of the failure of several Member States to pay their assessed contributions. The international community trusts that the ad hoc Group of 18 experts will be of assistance in overcoming these problems. In any event, the international community knows full well that our contributions to the United Nations are a legal obligation that no one can repudiate unilaterally.

The increasing disregard for the norms of international law and the continued unjustified use of force are particularly serious symptoms of the current situation of the community of States. Our Organization cannot and must not be seen as an

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annoying obstacle to hegemonic aspirations but rather as the only civilized possibility for coexistence in our time. The essential conditions for transforming the international order for the benefit of all are: the improvement of institutions; effectiveness in reaching goals; complete respect for principles; and the genuine political will to strengthen the United Nations system for the benefit of all.

The restoration of confidence is incompatible with exclusivist views of the international scene and with definitions of that scene as an arena for political struggle for the defence of individual interests. The voice of the majority cannot be ignored in this forum. Disregard for its will ignores our characteristic diversity and eliminates precious possibilities for genuine, pluralistic coexistence.

It is our fate all to live on the same planet, and it is our joint responsibility to make that planet habitable for all peoples, avoiding fruitless friction and erosion, which bear upon the weakest. Harmonious coexistence and civilization can prevail only if based upon respect for the rights of others and upon joining efforts to solve problems of universal interest.

The grave economic and financial crisis of our time is an expression of unsolved structural problems in the international order. This crisis poses a serious threat to stability in relations among States and affects the social and political peace of all peoples.

Unfortunately, the standstill in global negotiations, which are of vital importance to our development, has exacerbated recession and impoverishment. We have repeatedly pointed to a profound unfairness in trade between industrialized and developing nations, and have demanded that the costs of growth be shared more equitably between rich and poor countries.

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Obviously, the effort to achieve growth is a major responsibility of our societies. We recognize that much remains to be done, much remains to be improved to that end. But our internal efforts will be unavailing if the world economic climate is unfavourable to us. The problems of Africa, Asia and Latin America also involve the developed economies which have often imposed upon us conditions which are disadvantageous for productive development, technology transfers, and the marketing of our exports, not to mention the financial drain suffered by our economies. Our countries have contributed to the well-being and even on occasion to the extravagance of the more advanced countries. It is time for the more powerful to see the historical fact that their own future and security depend also on their being flexible with regard to the demands of the weaker, and by making genuine contributions to their development and thus to the common good.

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An appeal for joint responsibility in solving the different aspects of the crisis does not mean attributing blame but rather calling on all nations to assume their commitments so as to face together what no nation can solve by itself.

The search for options must take into account the close relationship between debt, trade and currency. We know that a good part of our financial difficulties derives from the enormous burden of servicing foreign debt. We need both the restructuring of the existing debt and fresh resources, but we are also convinced that the reduction of real interest rates to past levels is urgently needed and would offer equitable alternatives that would benefit the entire international financial system. We must not forget that current levels have generated substantial profits for the international banks.

Solution of the crisis implies an improvement in the terms of exchange. It further requires, without a doubt, the elimination of protectionism and better prices for our commodities. From this perspective I should like to emphasize the importance of the new round of trade negotiations within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the need for oil producers and consumers to resume talks with a view to stabilizing the market. In such cases communication among the parties involved is an irreplaceable means of furthering the common good.

Greater international co-operation and adequate financial flows are also necessary in order for our countries to develop without becoming indebted and in order to break the vicious cycle of need that condemns us to poverty.

Mexico has been particularly scrupulous in dealing prudently with its financial difficulties. Thus far we have respected our international commitments thanks to a tremendous effort on the part of our people, whose standard of living has, as a result, been negatively affected. Though we have recently achieved important agreements with regard to managing the foreign debt that will allow for

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moderate growth over the next two years, we are aware that such agreements are temporary and perhaps insufficient. That will hold true as long as we do not find long-term political and economic solutions of universal scope.

The problems of energy, trade, productivity, finance and indebtedness that we all face require global and mutually acceptable solutions; otherwise the world economy will remain subjected to the tragic cycle of recession and recovery, which has not been unrelated to the political instability and the conflicts affecting various parts of the world.

In calling attention to this situation, Mexico expresses its full solidarity with the developing peoples that are struggling for a more just and balanced international economic order. We will spare no effort on their behalf in the search for just and realistic solutions through negotiations. We betray neither our sovereignty nor our historical positions in seeking, with flexibility and responsibility, agreements that further our legitimate interests.

Bipolar confrontation and the intensification of regional conflicts, added to the arms race, have been jeopardizing world peace and security since the beginning of this decade. We are encouraged by the possibility of détente between the great Powers that is being renewed after a period of estrangement and uncertainty.

We hope that negotiation and dialogue will reduce tensions. That is why we express our wish that a renewal of contacts between those Powers, at the highest level if necessary, will lead to permanent agreements, providing us all with genuine security. We hope that this possibility will soon become fact.

We must not forget, however, that there are many other issues besides this question, so critical in our time, which do not fit into the framework of the East-West relationship. North and South must redefine the structure of their relations. Beyond any prevailing tendencies, today's world presents a diversity

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that does not permit of rigid or simple viewpoints. East and West, North and South offer a plurality of ways of life that constitutes the true wealth of today's community of nations.

Every nation impresses upon its foreign policy traits derived from its own historical experience and can express in this forum, free of pressure and in complete independence, its views on the international situation and the reasons for whatever initiatives it promotes. This is the highest virtue of the democratic spirit of our Organization. All voices must be heard and considered, for political astuteness is not necessarily on the side of economic or military power.

In its active participation in international forums, Mexico always seeks to be constructive. We do not come here to oppose anybody, or to vote for or against anybody, but to maintain and strengthen principles expressly accepted by the international community. Our political tradition and the cordial relations we try to maintain with all the countries of the world are rooted in our unbending conviction that the power of law is greater than the power of force. Thus we have participated in actions that contribute to the reduction of international tension and to the solution of regional problems. We have raised our voice in negotiations between the industrialized and the developing worlds. We have also made clear our commitment to the processes of decolonization, and we demand respect for human rights wherever they are violated.

At the same time, historical experience forces us, faithfully and constantly, to defend the principles of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples and to stand with conviction for the peaceful settlement of disputes and international co-operation. For the same reasons we are unwaveringly opposed to the undue use of force and to the threat of its use. Mexico maintains that full

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respect for the norms of international law is an essential prerequisite of the trust and justice that must prevail among civilized nations.

We also know that the struggle for peace and development is not an abstract task that rests upon the mere statement of principles. On the contrary, principles acquire their true meaning only as they are concretely implemented. That is why my Government has committed itself to various initiatives which seek constructive solutions to international problems.

There is a vast movement throughout the world demanding that humanity be freed from the danger of a nuclear holocaust. The non-nuclear countries share that aspiration. We cannot remain indifferent to a threat that affects security, impedes development and jeopardizes the survival of all peoples.

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Mexico has associated itself with various proposals for nuclear disarmament, both on the regional and on the universal level. Yesterday, along with other Latin American countries, we helped to bring about the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Today, we participate actively in the multilateral organizations devoted to disarmament. Our role in the Group of the Five Continents, together with the Heads of State and Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden and Tanzania, fully substantiates Mexico's peace-loving position and its adamant will that we all be freed from the nightmare of a possible nuclear conflagration that would yield neither victors nor vanquished and would reduce several millennia of civilization to radioactive dust within a matter of seconds, making life itself disappear.

In the Declarations that we have signed, first at New Delhi in 1985 and just last month in the Mexican city of Ixtapa, we have stated that it is incumbent upon all men and all peoples, and not just those Governments which possess the technical capacity to wreak total destruction, to make efforts to halt the arms race. We have issued a fervent appeal for world-wide détente and the conclusion of agreements aimed at halting the irrational arms race. We have also called, in both Declarations, for better use of the human and material resources which are now being squandered upon the instruments of death, and for their application to the development of peoples and the satisfaction of their most urgent and vital needs.

In the New Delhi Declaration we called upon the super-Powers to suspend nuclear tests, as a first step toward a treaty banning them entirely. We also took a firm stance against the militarization of outer space. In Mexico, we presented specific proposals to verify the suspension of nuclear tests; we insisted upon the dangers inherent in an arms race in outer space; and we reiterated our conviction

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that dialogue among the Powers must lead to the adoption of concrete disarmament accords.

Our statements, whose legitimacy flows from the fact that they express the wishes of all mankind, are but the first in a series of efforts that the international community will have to undertake, in the hope of eradicating nuclear weapons.

The great challenge confronting human intelligence as the twentieth century draws to a close is to achieve the convergence of peace, disarmament and development so that, joined at last, they may forge for human society a way of life and a destiny never to be renounced.

The prevention of nuclear war is linked to the solution of conflicts affecting the balance of power. In various geographical areas the exercise of force and intolerance hinder chances for conciliation.

Similarly, the obduracy of certain States, which insist that we view in terms of the East-West conflict the struggles for self-determination being waged by the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, retard and restrain the inevitable triumph of those peoples.

In Central America, the crisis is deepening, and the chances for promoting a peaceful solution are often squandered and underestimated. Mexico has spared no effort in the search for just agreements that would respect the legitimate interests of all the Central American States. Thus, together with the Governments of Colombia, Panama and Venezuela and with the active support of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, we have encouraged strategies that would lay the foundations for peaceful coexistence and co-operation in the region. We have given detailed reports to the United Nations on the progress of our diplomatic efforts.

Allow me to reiterate once again that Contadora and its Support Group cannot

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be a substitute for the political responsibility of the Central American Governments. Peace is their decision above all, just as it is the decision of those other States that help determine the course of events because of their presence and influence in the area.

We cannot supersede the will of the parties directly involved; but neither can we remain indifferent to situations that not only jeopardize regional stability and our common future but also violate the dignity of the peoples of Latin America and harm our legitimate national interests.

One State's disagreement with the political process of another State does not justify, in any circumstance, the perpetration of acts that are outside the bounds of international law. Latin America has undertaken an intense diplomatic effort which cannot be ignored. Several times, as in Caraballeda early this year, the Governments of Latin America have proposed concrete measures aimed at creating an atmosphere favourable to conciliation. These measures are well balanced in regard to the effort required of each party - whether directly or indirectly involved in the process - in order to re-establish the juridical order and facilitate the conclusion of agreements. We are convinced that our viewpoints, enshrined in the Contadora Treaty for Peace, Security and Co-operation in Central America, remain valid in the light of current circumstances.

Latin America has opened the doors to dialogue and compromise in Central America, as part of the process of negotiation and integration it has decided to promote. Mexico states once again that it is fully willing to contribute to the pacification of the area.

We stand for negotiated solutions to conflicts not only in the region which is closest to us but also in other areas, whether in the South Atlantic, southern Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean or South-East Asia. We are convinced

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that, with an imaginative and constructive approach, opportunities for understanding can be found in each of these places.

Within the context of the permanent struggle for decolonization, the case of Namibia deserves special mention. Its illegal occupation by South Africa must not be tolerated by the international community. That Territory's independence is beyond any geopolitical considerations, and it is incumbent upon all Member States of the United Nations to ensure that it is achieved. The immoral behaviour of the opprobrious South African régime, with its policy of racial segregation, similarly demands a response from our Organization. We note with interest that the trend towards the imposition on the Pretoria Government of sanctions envisaged in the Charter has received new and important forms of support in the course of this year.

The developing countries have always recognized that the United Nations is an essential part of any effort to promote the democratization of international relations. Apart from constituting the forum best suited to guaranteeing peace and security, it has also been a privileged place in which to discuss the most difficult problems of our time.

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It is here that the Member States have had an opportunity to examine social and economic affairs that merit a clear and effective response from the international community. Suffice it to recall that in 1987, thanks to an initiative taken by the Secretary-General, there is to be an International Conference on Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking, at which we shall be able to examine objectively that complex criminal process, which involves centres of production as well as consumption.

The Organization's ability to respond to the demands and needs of our time has been fully demonstrated. However, we cannot refrain from insisting that the strengthening of the United Nations system depends primarily on the political will of States to respect the purposes and principles of the Charter. We must improve the Organization and, more important than ever, we must endow it with a new legitimacy based on the lawful behaviour of all States. Force and military might cannot be above the law. In our day, civilized life and the security of States depend upon our respect for international norms. If those norms do not prevail, we can hardly aspire to peaceful, stable, just coexistence. The strengthening of our Organization and its effectiveness also depend upon the prevalence of those norms.

Because of their interdependence and their difficulty, world problems cannot be solved solely through bilateral channels, or even by a sum of partial and fragmentary agreements. Because of their complexity, they require multilateral solutions that bring together common aspirations and achieve unity in decisions and actions.

Just as dialogue and détente among the great Powers can no longer be postponed, just as it is necessary to restructure the international economic order so that North and South have equitable shares in its benefits and hardships alike, so must the revitalization of multilateral forums become a priority item on the agenda for the remainder of this century.

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It is incumbent on the United Nations to play an essential role in building more just and democratic international relations. It is also the role of our Organization to guarantee peaceful and rational coexistence, co-operation and solidarity among peoples. Let us improve it, if necessary and wherever necessary, but for as long as it endures let us recognize that it is perhaps our only and our highest guarantee of security, peace and civilization.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United Mexican States for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Miguel de la Madrid, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. PIRES de MIRANDA (Portugal) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): Please accept, Mr. President, my congratulations on your election. I am sure that your well-known qualities and long-standing experience of political and diplomatic life will enable you to make a decisive contribution to the success of the work of the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I would also like to pay a special tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, for the competent and authoritative manner in which he presided over the last regular session of the Assembly. His success in the exercise of his important functions is certainly a source of pride to his country, to which I extend my congratulations.

I wish also to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our appreciation of the energy, commitment and devotion he shows in carrying out his mission as leader of the Organization in a troubled period in international life.

(Mr. Pires de Miranda, Portugal)

The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, current President of the Council of Ministers of the European Community, has already presented the points of view of the Twelve on the different items of concern to the international community. Those points of view touch not just on Europe but on the rest of the world as well and carry the weight of expressing the consensus of 12 States, many of which, like Portugal, have long, rich experience of contacts with other continents. This being the first year in which Portugal has taken part in the general debate at the United Nations General Assembly as a full member of the European Community, I should like to make a brief reference to the great significance of that fact and the way we view the process of the construction of Europe.

Notwithstanding the special links that throughout the centuries Portugal has developed with other continents, which are today translated into privileged ties with countries in Africa, America and Asia, Portugal is a European and eminently Atlantic nation. It was in Europe that, often against entrenched autocratic Powers, the values that we cherish first came to light and then took hold: the yearning for freedom, democratic life and respect for the rights of the individual.

Thus, the historical and geographical context in which Portugal exists led us to make fundamental choices, manifested on the one hand in our participation in the Atlantic Alliance and in the maintenance of close relations with the United States of America, and on the other in our joining the process of European political and economic integration. The identity of the values of civilization of Europeans and Americans gives the Atlantic Alliance its full meaning as an essential instrument for the defence and preservation of free and democratic societies.

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Accordingly, Portugal views its active participation in the tasks of the Atlantic Alliance and its entry into the European Communities as two converging factors of its position within the international context.

For the Portuguese people, belonging to the European Communities is a reaffirmation of its definite choice of a free, democratic and pluralistic organization of society, of the economy and of the State. Joining the European Economic Community does have an important economic component, which, we firmly believe, will be a powerful factor in the economic modernization of our country; but it was and still is, first and foremost, a political choice, reinforcing Portuguese democracy.

In line with this position - representing a truly national option, shared by all Governments and supported by all democratic political parties - we look towards the construction of a more united Europe, increasingly able to speak on the international scene with a single voice as an important contribution to strengthening democracy in the world, refusing neutralist temptations or any other projects for casting Europe as a "third way", at an equal distance between the two strategically opposed Powers.

We deem it indispensable that the risk of confrontation between these two Powers be reduced. But peace is a political task which is never fully ended and therefore is always in need of being undertaken anew. Arms are not, in themselves, a cause of war but only its instrument. Therefore we think that in order to achieve a lasting peace it will be necessary to work for the solution of the existing political conflicts. We are hopeful that both super-Powers will find paths of dialogue and negotiation, possibly through meetings at the highest level.

Portugal maintains a persistent and committed participation in all concerted efforts to achieve balanced, meaningful and verifiable results in the field of

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disarmament and arms control. In such a complex matter, it would be useful to look for concrete results in some areas that may serve as an example and standard for negotiations in other sectors. Thus, with regard to the elimination of chemical weapons, it will be of the utmost importance to reach an agreement on effective and trustworthy measures of verification. In fact, the possibility of credible verification is crucial to any just and balanced agreement on arms control or elimination.

The final document of the Stockholm Conference establishes politically binding security and confidence-building measures far more concrete and meaningful than those contained in the Helsinki Final Act. It was possible to bring the Soviet Union to accept modalities of inspection which, although modest, point to an openness and transparency in military matters that Portugal has always advocated. My country was a co-sponsor of the main proposals on which the final document is based. As we see it, the positive results achieved in Stockholm were made possible by the constant co-ordination among the Western allies.

We trust that in this domain, as well as in the fields of economic relations and human contacts, the follow-up of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe - which soon will resume in Vienna - will pave the way for taking a step forward in the implementation of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, thus making a decisive contribution to international détente, to a balanced and reciprocal content for relations among countries with different social and political systems and, further, to fulfilling the expectations of those who see in the Helsinki principles the way - or the hope - of accomplishing their destinies in freedom and reaching the level of progress they wish for.

I cannot but express my satisfaction at the restoration of democracy in several countries the world over, particularly in Latin America, where several

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nations returned to democratic political life, sometimes despite grim forecasts stressing the obstacles along that path. Portugal, which for nearly half a century lived under an authoritarian régime and 12 years ago returned to democracy, knows from its own experience how to appreciate fully the value of freedom. Allow me to mention the process of democratic reaffirmation going on in a great sister nation - I refer of course to Brazil - that stimulates and eases the closeness between Portugal and Brazil which their past and their common language require, which responds to the deepest sentiments of their two peoples and to which the authorities of both States are committed.

Unfortunately, not all Latin American countries live under democratic régimes. There, as elsewhere in the world, we view with concern the persistence of dictatorships and of totalitarian régimes. However, we are convinced that where dictatorial repression exists popular determination will find a way to impose itself and freedom and respect for human rights will be restored. But the cases in which a totalitarian ideology is progressively being forcibly imposed on society and the State seem more problematic to us. As we all know very well, when this kind of régime takes hold, not only taking away from the people their political freedom but seeking also to control their whole lives, including private lives, and trying to direct individual consciences, then the restoration of freedom becomes exceedingly difficult.

The obstacles to the realization of the most fundamental civil and political rights that exist in some countries in Central America - whose situation is being debated elsewhere in this General Assembly - are closely linked to the persistence in the region of a deep economic, social and political crisis, the main victims of which are the populations living in the area. We deem it essential that the different groups involved make a serious effort to reach, through dialogue and

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national reconciliation, in a democratic and pluralistic framework, a balanced compromise for their interests and aspirations that may allow Central American nations to negotiate a peaceful solution to their differences, without external interference and within respect for the inviolability of their borders, in a climate of mutual trust leading to the reduction of the level of armaments in the region. Portugal regrets that the efforts developed in that direction by the Contadora Group and its Support Group have not so far brought forth results.

The consolidation of democracy and respect for fundamental human rights, to be fully achieved, need growing economies that further social development. The stage of social and economic underdevelopment of huge areas of the world, some of which are tragically stricken by hunger, is alarming. As was made clear by the report on the critical economic situation in Africa, which we debated here last May, in addition to factors internal to those economies - such as the neglect to which agriculture was long subject, the excess of unproductive expenditures in the state sector and the lack of incentives to small enterprises - there are negative factors at the international level, namely, the foreign debt of several countries and trade protectionism.

Protectionism is an unjust and absurd practice, in particular if practised by rich countries which thus make more difficult for other nations the access to hard currencies so necessary to balance their external accounts - a balance most important to the health of the international financial system. Moreover, when they give in to protectionist pressure, industrialized countries are going against their long-term interests, inasmuch as they are artificially impeding a more rational use of productive resources. At times Portugal has also been a victim of short-sighted measures of this kind.

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As regards foreign debt, the international community must acknowledge that the financial problem is compounded by political factors whose importance should not be underestimated. Moreover, in the economic and financial fields, mere restrictive prescriptions do not solve anything by themselves, while they call for heavy sacrifices and suffering.

Development is the only way out of the debt crisis. We welcome recent progress made towards taking these realities into account, but we deem it insufficient given the seriousness of the problem. External obstacles to development must be eliminated, be they of a financial or commercial nature - always with the awareness that development will not take place unless, within every national economy, there is the political will to generate favourable conditions for action and free initiative by economic agents.

Portugal's accession to the European Community and the active part it intends to play therein will not cause us to turn our attention from our relationships in other areas of the world. Quite to the contrary: as history shows, we are a people open to the world and with a great capacity for merging with other cultures and mingling with other races. The Portuguese established fraternal contacts on practically all continents, always carrying with them a mentality opposed to any form of racism and a tolerant and open-minded attitude towards other civilizations.

Given the crisis at all levels that has been affecting the African continent - particularly sub-Saharan Africa - the main thrust of our co-operation effort is being directed to that area, and specifically to Portuguese-speaking African countries. However, in addition to the economic co-operation effort so essential to countries which, for varied reasons, are facing problems of economic, financial and social development inherent in their recent accession to statehood, particular attention must be given to co-operative relations in the political field.

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Those relations should, whenever possible, be aimed at lessening prevailing political instability, particularly in the area around Angola and Mozambique. Portugal has spared no effort in contributing to the establishment of a climate of political dialogue capable of paving the way for peace - and thence development - in southern Africa.

Angola and Mozambique, together with their front-line partners, have been subject to a deterioration in security conditions that is seriously hindering progress towards peaceful development, to which their populations legitimately aspire. Let me reiterate Portugal's solidarity with the front-line States in the situation in which they find themselves and which makes development so much more difficult for them. That solidarity has also been expressed through the support we have been able to provide within the framework of the Southern Africa Development and Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), as well as through the African Bank for Development - two outstanding examples of the ability of African countries to realize their enormous potential.

At the political level, our solidarity finds expression in our support for efforts undertaken by the front-line States aimed at promoting dialogue and exploring possible solutions to southern Africa's problems, as was done at the recent meeting attended by the European Community countries and the front-line States at Lusaka.

The postponement of Namibian independence is surely one of the main factors of instability in the area. For several years now, in this and other international forums - the latest of which was the Vienna International Conference on the Immediate Granting of Independence to Namibia, held this summer - Portugal has demonstrated its interest in seeing that question solved. We continue to be firmly convinced that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is the only acceptable basis

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for a solution to this problem, and we are anxious at the successive delays and obstructions that have prevented its implementation.

I wish to stress our apprehension due to the feeling that, of late, the question of Namibia has been allowed to drag on without any real effort being made to resolve it. We must break that stalemate, which besides contributing to destabilization in the area, only serves to exacerbate feelings of frustration in regard to the possibility of negotiating a peaceful solution to a situation that is in flagrant violation of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. To that end, commitment and a clear contribution from the Republic of South Africa are needed.

Portugal's opposition to the apartheid system is not recent, nor does it stem from mere political expediency. That is demonstrated by the fact that, throughout the changing fortunes of its history, the Portuguese nation never indulged in racist practices in the territories under its administration. To our firm condemnation of the apartheid system as a flagrant and systematic violation of the most fundamental human rights, we add our concern at the constant instability it provokes throughout southern Africa.

Similarly, we unequivocally condemn armed aggression against neighbouring countries. Moreover - and notwithstanding the difficulties inherent in the process of radical change in any society - it is urgent that the South African authorities and that part of the population that supports them prepare to face the present and look to a future which must be met boldly, imaginatively and fearlessly.

We firmly hope that the South African authorities are prepared to show in a timely and credible manner that they are ready to abandon the illusion that delays, dashed hopes or violence can be an answer to the legitimate expectations of the majority of the population they rule. For South Africa to become a democracy,

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without winners or losers, it must urgently proceed to the complete eradication of the apartheid system. It is essential that the Government put an end to the state of emergency, free Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and legalize banned political parties. On the other hand, all the forces legitimately fighting the apartheid system must also contribute to the cessation of violence and to the establishment of dialogue, which is the only means towards a peaceful and lasting reconciliation of the various interests at stake.

We believe that maintaining international pressure can help to make clear to the South African Government the need to hasten the process of change in that country. We must, however, concentrate our efforts at finding ways to bring home to that part of the South African population that holds power - and without whose participation a peaceful, negotiated solution acceptable to all cannot be conceived - the need for a change in attitude, without at the same time causing further deterioration to the situation of the peoples and countries already gravely affected by the apartheid system.

Terrorism is an issue that has been with us for several years but which has of late known troubling developments, the seriousness of which is underscored by the intolerable fact that certain States support and promote it, as has become clear. It is highly regrettable that in the name of obscure and frequently senseless goals, supposedly responsible members of the international community sponsor common law crimes which affect and harm societies and individuals entirely unknown to them and from whose death or wounding they have nothing to gain.

Through the adoption of conventions, resolutions and declarations of intent, the international community has on several occasions indicated its concern and its will to join efforts to eradicate that type of activity.

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But we must go beyond words. It is of the greatest importance that the international conscience be kept active and attentive to the requirements of the anti-terrorist struggle which, however, while it requires sacrifices, cannot be invoked to curtail fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. For its part, Portugal is actively participating in concerted efforts to combat terrorism - at the regional level, in the Council of Europe and within the European Communities. It is, no doubt, an arduous and delicate task but one which admits of no hesitation: it implies firm action internally and adequate co-ordination internationally, namely through the adoption of measures that will be effective in reducing opportunities for the individuals or groups concerned to carry out their projects.

Among other grave problems that preoccupy us, I wish to stress the situation in the Middle East, because of the non-realization of the right to self-determination and other fundamental human rights, because of the tensions it breeds in the area and because of the frustration of the many and devoted efforts to reach a peaceful negotiated solution to the problems of the area. Portugal's position on this matter is well known. We believe that any solution to the problem must be global: it must respect the right of all States in the area, Israel included, to live within secure and recognized borders; it must ensure the self-determination of the Palestinian people; and it must make possible the restoration of peace in Lebanon. Such a solution presupposes that the parties directly concerned will commit themselves to an effort to end the lack of mutual trust, which is an insurmountable obstacle to negotiation. In spite of the persistent difficulties in the way of diplomatic and negotiating efforts, we continue to place our hopes on their potential to find and unblock the way to peace. We sincerely hope that the recent contacts between the leaders of Egypt and Israel will be a step in this direction.

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Still in the Middle East area, I would like to mention our concern with the devastating consequences of the conflict between Iraq and Iran, two countries still at war, in spite of the appeals of the international community, for reasons ever more difficult to discern and with irreparable losses in human lives, lives that are being annihilated by a terrible potential for destruction, with serious consequences for the stability of the Gulf, where freedom of navigation continues to be seriously threatened. We appeal here to the leaders of those two countries to negotiate and, in that context, we reiterate our support for the mediation efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in particular.

In addition to these cases, there are others in which violations of rights - of which this Organization is the standard-bearer and which we are all bound to respect - are perpetrated with the deliberate intention of altering the geo-strategical balances. Afghanistan and Kampuchea are two cases in point of countries and peoples victimized by the presence of foreign troops, in the most blatant violation of the right to self-determination, a situation that must, as a matter of urgency, be put to an end, for every reason, including that of maintaining confidence in the principle that respect for the sovereignty of States is the basis of international order.

The requirements of credibility and coherence which States must uphold as responsible agents of international relations are being particularly put to the test in the case of East Timor, where the Timorese people continue to live in the expectation of exercising their legitimate right to self-determination. As the internationally recognized administering Power, Portugal has supported in every way the mandate given to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/30 to try to find, for the problem of East Timor, a global and just solution acceptable to all parties. We greatly appreciate the efforts undertaken in that direction by the Secretary-General in the last few years. We have shown

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our readiness for dialogue, without which international disputes cannot be solved. Although we are not as yet close to the desired solution, we continue to negotiate, in the hope of reaching a globally positive result.

We do not forget our goals, our commitment to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Timorese people and of its own identity, the defence of its freedoms and of individual rights in that territory. However, it is not possible to fulfil the legitimate expectations and rights of the Timorese people if they are denied the freedom to choose their own destiny. To us respect for the principle of self-determination of peoples is fundamental. I am sure that it will not be any less so for the international community.

I believe that the grave financial situation in which this Organization finds itself is a cause for concern that I share with all members of this Assembly. In the years of prosperity, there apparently developed a tendency to see in the United Nations a deus ex machina capable of embracing and solving the problems of one and all. The international situation that has in the last few years affected many of the Member States was brought before this Organization with some delay and, perhaps for this reason, to the surprise of some of us. Austerity is now called for. The figures show - in such a way that no doubts can be entertained about this point - that expectations have to be reduced to the level of existing resources. The financial crisis certainly reflects a crisis that could be called a "growing up crisis" but which reflects a reality we can only call political.

In permitting the participation of all States in decisions related to the safeguarding of peace, respect among nations, protection of the rights of man, justice, freedom and economic development, the United Nations performs the essential function of upholding pluralism among nations. It would be difficult indeed for the United Nations not to mirror the contradictions inherent in this reality.

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The United Nations will overcome the present crisis. However, it will have to fight atavisms, to abandon theoretical needs that are frequently translated into requests which sometimes make the Secretariat look like a research department. We must be realistic: where there is no room for agreement, we must work to create the conditions necessary to obtain it, without trying to disguise, with bureaucratic initiatives, difficulties that are known to all. The Member States must take the responsibilities that fall to them as their lot in this situation without overlooking the fact that careful management of resources and the timely payment of contributions are basic elements in the political life of the United Nations.

We would like to make clear that if we support the introduction of a greater financial discipline in the United Nations, we do not in any way wish to limit or hinder the capacity to act and the vigour of the Organization. On the contrary, we desire to strengthen its credibility. We wish therefore to find a solution for the financial problems of the United Nations, not only for economic reasons, but because we want to see its capacity for intervention reinforced, its initiatives respected, and its voice listened to. In this sense, Portugal firmly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and awaits with eager expectation the results of the work of the Group of Eighteen.

The general debate that takes place annually in the General Assembly has the merit of taking us beyond our own particular concerns, which often absorb our day-to-day activities, to a global appreciation of the problems that the world is facing today and to re-examine its multiple aspects. The last few decades have been rich in events, many of which have brought with them the potential for radical change, which has left its mark on societies, both internally and externally, and has forced them into frequently painful processes of adjustment. The intensity and the dynamics of such processes have provoked and still provoke a series of readjustments, which have been, and are being, felt at the most varied levels.

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However, if we take into account the complexity of the time in which we are living and the evolution of the international situation in the 41 years since the actual format of international relations developed, we will, in spite of everything, be led to formulate a favourable judgement about the capacity generically shown by the diverse agents to manage the innumerable crises they have faced and to live up to the challenge of progress. Portugal and the Portuguese people, whose recent history illustrates the importance of the struggle for democratic pluralism, for freedom and for justice, confidently accept this challenge.

Mr. WU Xueqian (interpretation from Chinese): May I begin, Sir, by warmly congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am sure that with your ability and experience you will make outstanding contributions to the work of the current session. At the same time, I should like to extend my high respects to Mr. Jaime de Piniés for his fruitful work as the President of the fortieth session.

A year ago we were meeting here to commemorate the grand occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. We expressed our ardent desire for the maintenance of world peace and promotion of international co-operation, put forward quite a few proposals and voiced concerns and anxieties over the turbulent international situation. The year 1986 is the International Year of Peace. The people of the world have made various efforts for peace and the forces against war and for peace have grown further. In November last year the United States and the Soviet Union held a summit meeting, indicating in their joint statement that "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" (A/40/1070, p. 3) and acknowledging that the two countries bear special responsibilities for halting the arms race and carrying out nuclear disarmament. During their talks and dialogues on the question of arms control and disarmament, each side indicated that it would reduce its strategic nuclear weapons by 50 per cent. Since then there has been a certain degree of relaxation of international tension. We welcome this development.

Nevertheless, people cannot fail to see that the United States and the Soviet Union are still far apart in their views and positions on the question of disarmament. At present the arms race is still going on, and various proposals and ideas for disarmament remain only on paper. No substantive progress has been achieved on disarmament and no solutions have been found to regional conflicts. The root cause of international tension still exists. Therefore, people have no

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reason to feel relieved about the present world situation. The creation of tension and confrontation goes against the wishes of the people of all countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union. The popular will for peace is an irresistible trend in the world today. The people of all countries must persist in their arduous efforts towards relaxation of international tension and the maintenance of world peace.

We hold that the key to disarmament lies in true sincerity in favour of disarmament, and the greatest test of the sincerity of the two major nuclear Powers is whether or not they will take practical steps to be the first drastically to reduce their armaments. We hope that they will reach an effective agreement through serious negotiations, take real actions for disarmament and not indulge in rhetoric, still less use disarmament talks as a cover for the arms race. In the present circumstances, it is necessary for them to be the first jointly to undertake not to launch a nuclear war or resort to the use or threat of force against other countries, so that favourable conditions may be created for disarmament and the relaxation of international tension.

China has all along opposed the arms race and its extension to outer space. We stand for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and for the substantial reduction of conventional weapons. We are in favour of the peaceful use of outer space. In his statement on 21 March 1986, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang gave a comprehensive and systematic elaboration of the Chinese Government's position of principle on the question of disarmament, including such issues as nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament, intermediate missiles, space weapons, chemical weapons and the relationship between disarmament and security. At the same time, China has taken actual steps towards disarmament in many areas. By the end of this year, it will

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complete the reduction of the number of its troops by 1 million. China has been cutting its military expenditures year by year and a considerable portion of its military industry has been shifted to civilian production. Some military airports and naval ports have been turned to civilian purposes. The Chinese Government has officially declared that it will no longer conduct atmospheric nuclear tests.

The basic views of the Chinese Government on disarmament are as follows.

The two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which possess by far the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals in the world, bear special and unshirkable responsibility for disarmament and should take the lead in drastic arms reduction. Nuclear disarmament should be carried out simultaneously with conventional arms reduction, and the two should promote each other.

As the question of disarmament affects the security interests of all countries in the world, every country should have a say in this question. The United Nations should play a greater role in disarmament. The two major nuclear Powers should heed, respect and accept the reasonable demands and propositions of various countries, especially the small and medium-sized countries. No disarmament negotiations or agreements between the major nuclear Powers should jeopardize the interests of other countries.

Disarmament and international security are closely related. Efforts to achieve disarmament should be combined with those for the maintenance of world peace and security. In order to ease international tension and maintain world peace, it is necessary not only to achieve effective arms reduction but also to oppose hegemonism and power politics, check aggression and expansion and resolve regional conflicts.

In keeping with the consistent stand of our Government on disarmament, the Chinese delegation will submit to the current session of the General Assembly

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draft resolutions on the question of nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament.

Peace is indivisible. Tensions or conflicts in any region will inevitably affect the peace and stability of the world as a whole. As an Asian country, China is, first of all, deeply concerned about security in Asia.

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The war of Vietnamese aggression against Kampuchea has been going on for eight years. Although Viet Nam has dispatched large numbers of troops and employed every means available, it has never succeeded in subduing Kampuchea. The so-called irreversible situation in Kampuchea as claimed by Viet Nam is nothing but a myth. Facts have demonstrated that Viet Nam cannot possibly succeed in its attempt to annex Kampuchea by force of arms. The only way to a settlement of the Kampuchean question is the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. The earlier Viet Nam extricates itself from the quagmire of the war in Kampuchea, the better it will serve the Vietnamese people and their national interests. The traditional friendship between China and Viet Nam will be restored provided Viet Nam effects a genuine withdrawal of troops from Kampuchea and gives up its anti-China policy.

Last March the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea headed by President Samdech Norodom Sihanouk put forward an eight-point proposal for a political settlement of the Kampuchean question. This proposal is fair and reasonable and conforms with the principles in the relevant resolutions adopted at successive sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. It has offered a reasonable basis for a political settlement of the Kampuchean question and thus won support from many countries. It is the consistent position of the Chinese Government that the Kampuchean question should be settled on the basis of the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions and the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea. China firmly supports the eight-point proposal of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and all the proposals and suggestions conducive to a just and reasonable settlement of the Kampuchean question put forward by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries.

We stand for a political settlement of the Kampuchean question. After the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops, just and reasonable solutions to Kampuchea's

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internal problems should be worked out by the Kampuchean people and by the various political forces in Kampuchea through consultations on an equal footing, free from external interference. China hopes that Kampuchea will be a peaceful, independent, neutral and non-aligned country and would not like to see any single group monopolize power. China seeks no selfish interests in Kampuchea. We are ready to join other countries concerned in an international guarantee that Kampuchea will enjoy the status of a peaceful, independent, neutral and non-aligned country. This is China's basic position on the question of Kampuchea.

The occupation of Afghanistan by foreign troops is an encroachment upon its independence and sovereignty and poses a grave threat to the security of the adjacent countries and peace in Asia. The international community has all along strongly demanded a just and reasonable settlement of the Afghan question at an early date in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The eight rounds of indirect talks in Geneva held under the auspices of the United Nations have failed to achieve substantive progress on the crucial question of the withdrawal of foreign troops. If the Soviet Union sincerely desires a political settlement of the Afghan question, it should implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and present a time-table acceptable to the international community for an early withdrawal of all its troops from Afghanistan.

It is the desire of the people to see relaxation of tension on the Korean Peninsula. We support the positive efforts made by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea and its reasonable proposals and demands for dialogue between the North and the South, tripartite talks and the withdrawal of United States troops from South Korea. We hope that the parties concerned will work together to ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula so as to promote the peaceful reunification of Korea.

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It is disturbing that the situation in the Middle East remains tense and turbulent. We have consistently supported the just struggle of the Arab countries and the Palestinian people. For them to sink their differences, strengthen unity and act in concert is a basic guarantee for victory in the Arab and Palestinian national causes. We hope that the parties concerned in the Middle East will seek a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question through political negotiations so as to bring peace to the region. To this end, the national rights of the Palestinian people must be restored, and Israel must abandon its policy of aggression and expansion and withdraw from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967. At the same time, the right to existence of all countries in the Middle East should be recognized and they should live in friendship on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

The widening and escalation of the Iran-Iraq war has posed a grave threat to peace and stability in the Gulf region and brought enormous suffering to the people of the two countries. Both Iran and Iraq are China's friends. We hope that the two neighbouring countries will exercise restraint and refrain from intensifying the war so as to create an atmosphere necessary for conducting peace talks and bringing about a cease-fire. We sincerely hope that in accordance with the norms of international law, they will settle their disputes on mutually acceptable terms through peaceful negotiations and bring an early end to the war.

Owing to external intervention, the situation in Central America is becoming more complicated. In order to put an end to the prolonged turmoil and bring about a just peace in Central America, it is imperative to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries in the region and do away with all external interference and power politics so that the people of these countries will be able to solve their own problems. Foreign military threat against, and intervention in, Nicaragua in violation of the norms governing

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international relations have aggravated the situation in this region and naturally met with the opposition of the international community. We support the just and reasonable principles put forward by the Contadora Group for solving the problems in Central America and hope that the Group will succeed in its efforts.

The situation in southern Africa is deteriorating and becoming even more volatile, as the South African authorities perpetrate racist atrocities, cling to their illegal occupation of Namibia and engage in grave provocations against the neighbouring countries. The Pretoria régime's sanguinary suppression of the black people in South Africa is a challenge to human dignity and international justice, which has aroused the great indignation and strong protest of the international community. The World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa held by the United Nations and the special session of the General Assembly on Namibia have played an important role in mobilizing the international community for intensified struggle against South African racism. We firmly endorse effective sanctions against the South African authorities and support the South African people in their heroic struggle against racism and for racial equality. We support the just struggle of the Namibian people for national independence and the efforts of the independent States in southern Africa to safeguard national security and bring peace and stability to the region.

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This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These two instruments are of positive significance to the realization of the purpose and principle of the United Nations Charter concerning respect for human rights. The Chinese Government has consistently supported this principle of the Charter. Just as in all other countries which were victims of imperialist and colonialist oppression, there were no human rights to speak of in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal old China. It is only following the founding of the People's Republic of China that Chinese citizens are able to enjoy extensive democratic rights. In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of China, the Chinese Government has adopted various measures to ensure the enjoyment by its citizens of all kinds of fundamental rights. With the progress made in economic development and structural reform in the past few years, there has been a steady improvement in socialist democracy and the legal system in China. Never before have the Chinese people enjoyed such a high degree of democracy and freedom as they do now.

We have noted with concern that, although the United Nations has formulated and adopted a number of international instruments on human rights, gross and massive violations of human rights continue to occur in many parts of the world as a result of colonialism, racism, foreign aggression and occupation. Moreover, interference in other countries' internal affairs in the name of protecting human rights is also a common occurrence. We call on the international community to make joint efforts to check these violations of the principles of the Charter.

In discussing the current international situation we must pay close attention to the question of development in the world. Over the past year the developed countries have maintained a low economic growth rate and many developing countries

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are still in grave economic difficulties. International economic relations are becoming increasingly imbalanced and irrational. The prices of most raw materials and primary products for export by the developing countries have kept falling and the export of their manufactured products has run into numerous obstacles owing to trade protectionism in the developed countries. External debts are weighing more and more heavily on the debtor countries. The developing countries are in desperate need of development funds, but, while capital inflow keeps dwindling, an abnormal phenomenon of reverse flow of funds has occurred.

Such developments serve to widen the gap between the developed and the developing countries, which will not only do great harm to the developing countries but also have grave consequences for the developed countries in the long run. The developed countries account for only one quarter of the world population of nearly 5 billion while the remaining three quarters are in the developing countries. The world economy cannot grow steadily without the economic growth of the developed countries, but at the same time its steady growth also depends to a great extent on whether the developing countries can overcome their difficulties and revitalize their economies. Therefore, helping to boost the economic growth of the developing countries will contribute both to the common prosperity of the world economy and to world peace and stability.

Following political independence, the developing countries are all committed to their domestic economic development. In the process they have made headway in a search for development strategies, economic structures and economic policies suited to their respective national conditions. Many of them have made readjustments and introduced reforms in their economies, with gratifying results. In addition to their own efforts and promotion of South-South co-operation, it is of great importance to the economic growth of the developing countries to improve North-South relations. As the developing countries are still fettered and harmed

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by the inequitable international economic relations, it would be difficult for them to attain the goal of economic development smoothly by merely relying on their own efforts. We hope that the developed countries will, in the overall interest of the world economy, help create an international environment favourable to the developing countries. The international community should take practical measures in trade, finance, development and other international economic fields to facilitate the flow of capital and transfer of technology to the developing countries, further increase their access to markets and reduce their debt burden, thus contributing to the overall growth of the world economy.

The special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, held last May, gave expression to the concern of the international community for Africa's economic recovery and development. We hope that the parties concerned, particularly the developed countries, will fully honour their commitments so as to ensure the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which was approved unanimously by the session.

International relations are now undergoing a great change. The newly independent countries which emerged in the post-war period, the numerous non-aligned and other small and medium-sized countries, regardless of their different situations, all treasure independence and oppose power politics. They desire peace and stability and oppose war and tension, and they all want to get actively involved in international affairs and play their part in maintaining peace and promoting international co-operation. It is no longer realistic simply to take ideology and social system as a criterion for differentiating countries and international political groupings. The time is gone for ever when a big Power or power centre could manipulate international relations according to its wishes. The

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recently concluded Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries proved once again that the Non-Aligned Movement is playing an important role in the international affairs of the day. The trend towards multipolarity in international relations and the growing aspiration of the peoples to take their destiny into their own hands are an inevitable historical development and constitute a positive factor making for peace.

We are of the view that all countries, regardless of their ideologies and social systems, should establish and develop relations on the basis of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

We are in favour of dialogue, which is the correct way for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Facts show that only through peaceful negotiations and consultations on an equal footing is it possible to remove contradictions and differences between States, forestall international conflicts and ensure international security.

Obviously, in order that dialogue can be conducted and yield positive results, the use or threat of force must be abandoned, the sovereignty and security of all States respected and all acts of aggression and expansion stopped. In no circumstances should a country be allowed to impose its will on others.

The Chinese people are now going all out in the drive for China's material, cultural and ethical advancement, determined to turn China into a modernized socialist country with Chinese characteristics through the efforts of several generations. China firmly pursues an independent foreign policy of peace, whose fundamental aim is to preserve world peace and secure an enduring peaceful international environment for its socialist modernization. Peace and development

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are inseparable. To have peace and development, we need friendship, co-operation and strengthened relations with other countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

(Mr. Wu Xueqian, China)

This year we in China have started to implement the Seventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. In the coming five years we shall basically complete the overall restructuring of our economy. Meanwhile, we shall adhere to the policy of opening up to the outside world, improve the environment for investment and expand our external economic relations. We are promoting the sustained and steady growth of China's economy by carrying out reform and the policy of opening up to the outside world, and we want to ensure successful and uninterrupted economic development by pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace. China's current domestic and foreign policies have proved to be sound and effective and in the interests of the people. We shall adhere to these policies with unshakeable determination.

The United Nations has entered upon its fifth decade since its founding. It has tremendous successes to its credit, but it also faces problems and difficulties. Since the restoration of its rightful seat in the United Nations China has always abided by the purposes and principles of the Charter, actively participated in the work of the Organization and endeavoured to perform its duty as one of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The financial crisis confronting the United Nations at the present time has caused widespread concern. We are of the view that the United Nations should undergo rational structural reforms, but such reforms must be aimed at strengthening, not weakening, the role of the Organization and must observe, not violate, the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, as provided for in the Charter. It is our sincere hope that the United Nations will, with the joint support of all Member States and through consultation on an equal footing, take the necessary measures to overcome the difficulties it faces and improve its efficiency, so as to achieve even greater success in its endeavour to safeguard world peace and promote international co-operation.

ADDRESS BY MR. JACQUES CHIRAC, PRIME MINISTER OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac.

Mr. Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister of the French Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the French Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. CHIRAC (France) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for me to address the Assembly on behalf of France.

The French Government is pleased, Sir, that the General Assembly is meeting this year under your distinguished guidance. Your election is a tribute to Bangladesh, whose commitment to peace and international co-operation is known to all of us here. It also bears witness to the confidence our delegations have in you, sure in the knowledge that you will carry out your mandate with the authority necessary to direct our work successfully. You can count on the whole-hearted co-operation of the French delegation, which offers you its warmest congratulations and its best wishes for success.

It is also a pleasure for me to salute our Secretary-General, whom I was delighted to receive in Paris a short time ago. I am happy to see him restored to health, and to be able to express again, here, the French Government's gratitude for the services he has rendered our Organization, and in particular for the decisive contribution he made to settling the dispute that had arisen between New Zealand and France. I hope he will obtain from all Member States the assurances he has every right to seek in order to continue the mission entrusted to him nearly five years ago, which he has carried out with such competence and skill.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

The fortieth anniversary of our Organization, while an occasion for celebrating our achievements, also reminded us of the limitations reality imposes on the implementation of the Charter.

To review the disillusionments and disappointments is in itself a salutary exercise. Today, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his remarkable report, our Organization faces not only the problem of its financial situation, but also the inability of its Members to agree on priorities and tasks. It is my feeling, however, that the general realization of past disarray and inadequacies has, for the first time, led to a commitment to real reform, as evidenced by the conclusions of the Group of 18.

No one disputes the existing shortcomings in co-operation between Members of the United Nations, but this necessary clear-sightedness should not lead us to take a pessimistic view. On the contrary, France considers that only a display of demonstrating realism can give us assurance that we shall be able to resolve the problems of today and those of the future.

The San Francisco Charter made the preservation of international peace and security the primary goal of the United Nations. Looked at uncompromisingly and without ideological bias, the world in which we live is seen to fall far short of the expectations of the founders of the United Nations.

One of the outstanding features of our age, accentuated by changes in attitudes and by technological progress, is the shrinking of our planet, which is leading to increasing overlapping of problems at the world level. No serious event, however localized, can leave us indifferent any more. Today neither conflicts nor alliances take account of frontiers or distances. They transcend differences of culture and race, without, however, eliminating them. On the contrary, in many cases, the internationalization of problems has triggered a backlash, sometimes very extreme, in the form of clannish behaviour of every kind.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Paradoxically, therefore, while the world is tending to become a single entity, it has not been able to overcome the threats and collective challenges confronting it. Conflicts and violations of human rights are increasing, while the cancer of terrorism is spreading. The arms race is continuing, spurred on by technological progress, the benefits of which ought rather to be shared throughout the world. The economic and financial situation of many third world countries remains very critical.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

In the Middle East, France has long maintained that peace must be based on principles which, for us, are self-evident. Israel's security and right to existence must be acknowledged and guaranteed; the Palestinian people must be permitted to exercise its right to self-determination. Peace presupposes first of all mutual recognition by the parties concerned and the primary responsibility of the parties in the quest for a settlement, which cannot be achieved by outside Powers, although their contribution may be very useful.

That being so, there is now talk again of convening a properly prepared conference with the presence of all the parties concerned. We approve of this in principle and are ready to play a full part in helping to find a solution to a conflict that is too serious for the international community to have the right to regard itself as powerless.

Among the favourable signs that may be noted is that the idea of the need for dialogue is gaining ground, albeit slowly. France has always welcomed indications to that effect.

Unfortunately, these rays of hope do not allow us to forget the unending crisis that is tearing Lebanon apart. It has tragic consequences for a people linked to France by age-old ties of every kind, a people France loves and respects.

Whatever else may have been said, Lebanon was once a very model of coexistence, tolerance, freedom and culture to the entire world. It would be an irreparable loss if this centre of intellectual vitality, whose light shone throughout the Mediterranean world, were to be engulfed in the rising tide of fanaticism and hatred. It is my fervent hope that this battered and ravaged country will one day find the path to reconciliation through the restoration of its independence and territorial integrity.

For the past several years, by virtue of its historical ties with Lebanon - but also because the issue far transcends Lebanon itself - France has made

(Mr. Chirac, France)

ceaseless efforts, at the price of considerable sacrifice, to promote the return to peace longed for by the vast majority of Lebanese. To that end, France decided to participate in international action which made it possible to limit the chaos in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion. Our Ambassador in Beirut, Louis Delamare, was among the first to pay with his life for his untiring efforts to renew dialogue between fraternal enemies. Dozens of French soldiers have been killed in the attempt to permit a return to the rule of law and to restore a minimum of normal life to the civilian population of Beirut.

In the south of that suffering country the international community is endeavouring to prevent a new escalation in the fighting and senseless violence. Side by side with other national contingents in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), French soldiers have all too often paid with their lives in a peace mission.

But of late the situation has become intolerable. The United Nations Force is no longer merely being caught in sporadic clashes between the enemies it is meant to be keeping apart; it has become the target of methodically prepared attacks which will soon leave it no alternative other than to retrench in order to ensure its own safety.

We must note that since its formation in 1978 UNIFIL has been unable to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council. That is why last April France drew the attention of the Council to this state of affairs and to the concern it was causing us. The events of the past few weeks have, unfortunately, confirmed our assessment. The sacrifices we have accepted to date give us the right to demand that each of us should shoulder his responsibilities and that the means available to the Force should be commensurate with the mission entrusted to it. We are facing a serious challenge to our Organization, its authority and its ability to carry out peace-keeping operations. That challenge must be met.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

For more than six years Iraq and Iran have been tearing each other apart in a war which, because of its intensity and the resources and tremendous losses it has entailed, can no longer be considered simply as a regional conflict. Freedom of navigation has been imperilled on shipping routes of vital importance for the world economy. The dogged prosecution of this absurd war threatens to shatter the equilibrium of a region of strategic importance. Like all other members of the international community, France is aware of and deeply concerned by this situation. We can but express our hope for a reasonable negotiated outcome to this protracted conflict, and we urge that the relevant Security Council resolutions finally be implemented. France supports all efforts to bring an end to this war, in particular the Secretary-General's offers of mediation.

Although I have dwelled at length on crises in the Middle East that our Organization has thus far, unfortunately, been powerless to resolve, I have no intention of forgetting all the others which have thwarted the peace efforts of our Organization for many years. These include: Cyprus, where a de facto situation which France does not recognize has been established; Afghanistan and Cambodia, subjects to which I shall return in this statement; the Korean peninsula, where division and tension have persisted for 40 years and where it is our earnest hope to see dialogue established between North and South, which is the only way to ease tension and then to resolve the Korean question. We wish the United Nations to be a truly universal body and, hence, for all the Korean people to be represented here. Other crises include the situation in Central America, where I hope that with the active assistance of all the countries in the region a solution may be found to the current crisis; and Western Sahara, where I hope that the joint efforts of the Secretary-General and of the past and current Chairmen of the Organization of African Unity will make it possible to resolve a conflict involving States friendly to France, a conflict which has already lasted too long.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

The international community cannot fail to express its indignation at the continuing daily violations of the most basic human rights throughout the world, whether such violations result from the wars raging in several areas or from deliberate policies. No pressure, regardless of its source, and no sophism can ever make us accept such violations. Transcending all ideologies and arguments prompted by expediency, there can be only one concept of human dignity.

I am pleased to see that in many States, especially the Philippines and Latin America, the return to democracy has shown that people have never forgotten it.

For several years now, with the courage born of determination to defend their independence and dignity, the Afghan and Cambodian peoples have been resisting foreign occupation and the authorities it has imposed on them.

In Afghanistan one third of the inhabitants of the country have had to seek refuge outside its borders. The elite of the population has had to leave the country in large numbers, and every day women, children and old people have been paying the price of the acts of war perpetrated against their villages in violation of all humanitarian principles.

In Cambodia the Khmer people, a friend of France, is the victim of increasingly oppressive foreign occupation. We are even witnessing a new form of colonization in that country.

Were the Afghan and Cambodian peoples to be given back their pride and freedom they would not constitute a threat to anyone in the region any more than they have in the past, and certainly not to their powerful neighbours. The invasions of which they are victims must be seen as wars of conquest belonging to another age, and France will continue to say, along with the vast majority of States, that the Soviet Union and Viet Nam must, in their own interest and for the sake of world peace, end their respective ventures in Afghanistan and Cambodia.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Speaking on behalf of the Twelve, Britain's Foreign Secretary has just stated once again that the institutionalized racial discrimination that the South African authorities persist in maintaining is unacceptable. The measures announced by Pretoria have so far not touched on essentials, and no one should be surprised that they have failed to check the spiral of violence.

While recognizing the complexity of the problems involved, France, together with its partners in the European Community, has decided to put into effect an additional programme of sanctions but believes that these arrangements should be supplemented by positive measures. Everything possible must be done to promote genuine dialogue, which of course presupposes the freeing of political prisoners.

Together with all those who are working to encourage moderation and conciliation in that country, we should like to believe that it is not too late to lay the foundations of a society in which, without exception, the right to dignity of all the communities that have built South Africa is at last recognized.

The tragic events in Istanbul, Karachi and Paris have proved once again that terrorism has become the systematic weapon of a war that knows no frontiers and is mostly faceless.

Admittedly the phenomenon is not a new one and instances of it are only too numerous. However, I am struck by the recent upsurge of terrorism and the growing number of victims. Here I must mention in particular the French, American and British hostages being held in Lebanon.

Unless it wants to delude itself, the international community should recognize that it has not always faced up to the scourge as unflinchingly as it should have. Some would have us believe that it is the only means of expression of oppressed peoples. The odious methods it uses, the slaughter of innocent people in free societies and the continuing blackmail over the lives of hostages make it impossible for us to confuse, even for a moment, those actions with genuine resistance.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Certainly no one would deny that the persistence of unresolved conflicts and the injustices they bring in their train is one of the sources of terrorism. But we must also denounce many other causes such as the rising tide of intolerance and fanaticism and the complicity of States that are willing to close their eyes to the activities of terrorist organizations or do not hesitate to use them to their own advantage and even go so far as to encourage them.

In a world in which indiscriminate terrorist violence can affect the citizens of all States, there was bound to be a reaction.

We are gratified to note that the General Assembly, reflecting that world-wide realization, last year condemned these cowardly and criminal practices and that the Security Council and the Commission on Human Rights have taken a firm stand against the taking of hostages. However, France, which took the initiative in submitting this question to the Commission on Human Rights, wishes to emphasize the need to supplement these texts, whose political significance is evident, with the concrete measures the situation calls for.

The determined action required would be made easier if all States were effectively to meet the obligations incumbent upon them under international law and conventions to which they have subscribed.

I venture to hope that the appropriate reaction of the international community expressed here will encourage all States to co-operate, particularly in the strengthening of air and maritime security, and convince them of the need to work through all appropriate channels, national and other, to eradicate terrorism.

Since the United Nations was founded the Organization and the entire international community have had to face up to the strategic realities of the nuclear age.

France is convinced that nuclear deterrence, which has prevented a direct confrontation between the two super-Powers for the past 40 years, remains an

(Mr. Chirac, France)

irreplaceable factor for peace and that there is no alternative within human grasp in spite of the rapid progress taking place in advanced technology, progress in which France has equipped itself to play a full part.

In view of the considerable disproportion in existing arsenals, any progress towards nuclear disarmament must begin with verifiable, progressive and balanced reductions in the entire range of American and Soviet strategic weapons systems. These reductions must be carried out under such conditions that the balance of nuclear deterrence is not called into question.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

All the speakers here have stressed the importance that progress in the current negotiations in Geneva between the Soviets and the Americans could have for East-West relations. France has already said many times that it would welcome a priori such prospects as might be opened by a Soviet-American summit meeting this year. It recognizes in particular the political importance that an agreement on a global limitation on intermediate-range weapons systems could have in the world. It must, however, observe that the reduction of those systems would affect only a very small part of the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union.

The President of the French Republic recalled in 1983 from this very rostrum the conditions which France has set for its participation in a nuclear disarmament process when the time comes. I should like to repeat here that these conditions will not change and that France will not agree to its forces being taken into account, directly or indirectly, in negotiations to which it is not a party.

As long as French security rests on nuclear deterrence, the first requirement for my country is to maintain the credibility of its strategic forces at the necessary level. For that reason, France has naturally declined to go along with any form of planned obsolescence of its forces while other Powers retain a huge excess nuclear capacity. It will accept neither a quantitative nor a qualitative freeze on its arsenal nor will it halt its nuclear tests. That arsenal does not exceed the level considered indispensable for our security and our independence. The nuclear tests are being carried out in unquestionably safe conditions that have been recognized as such by independent and undisputed experts from the countries of the Pacific to whom France has allowed access to its test site. Other States regularly carry out many tests and none of them provides or has provided such guarantees on the international level.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

With regard to Europe, the problem of security cannot be reduced solely to its nuclear aspects. What distinguishes our continent from all the others is that the permanent wound of its division is compounded by an unequal arms build-up of conventional and chemical weapons unmatched elsewhere in the world.

Several years ago France proposed that in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe an approach should be sought that would make it possible, in stages, to bring greater transparency to military activities and hence greater trust throughout our continent before initiating a gradual return to a lower level of the balance of armaments. In that spirit and, I would recall, on the basis of the French proposal, the Conference on disarmament in Europe was convened. It completed its work at Stockholm last week. We are pleased that the first East-West agreement on security to be reached in nearly 10 years came about in that context. This result should enable the follow-up conference of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which will meet shortly in Vienna, to make headway in all fields covered by the Helsinki Final Act - among them, human rights, the free movement of individuals, contacts among people - which, just as much as security and disarmament, affect the progress of East-West relations.

In regard to nuclear energy, France, like the rest of the world, was disturbed by the Chernobyl accident. The accident must be judged with due gravity and seriousness. On the other hand, it should not serve as a pretext for those who seek to speculate on fear and irrational sentiment. The analysis recently completed in Vienna by international experts confirms the specific nature of the Soviet reactor; the lessons of the Chernobyl tragedy cannot be transferred as such and applied to Western-type installations.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

France decided several years ago to base its energy independence on nuclear energy. That goal is well on the way to being reached today and cannot be brought into question. Conscious of what is at stake, France will naturally work for greater co-operation on safety already under way in the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But I should like to make the point here that the power to regulate in such an area must belong quite clearly to those who alone have the responsibility, capability and means to put into operation both the installations themselves and the regulations - in other words, national Governments. In the same spirit, France will continue to help interested countries acquire the benefits of the civilian applications of the atom once there is appropriate international monitoring to guarantee that the fruits of such co-operation are not diverted.

France and its partners in the European Space Agency have decided to confront the great challenge of the peaceful exploration of space. We for our part are resolved to prevent a gap from developing in this field between nations that would move ahead for their own advantage and the others, which would be denied the benefits of applications vital for their development: earth observation, meteorological applications, navigation, communications transmission and direct television. France will continue to work to further existing international co-operation and develop the co-operation planned for the years ahead.

We are bound to note today that the economic and financial situation of numerous third-world countries, especially the least developed among them, appears to have grown much worse. The situation is especially critical in Africa, and the special session which once again this year the General Assembly fortunately devoted to the problem highlighted the dimensions of the problem.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

The African countries know from experience that the efforts they have courageously decided to undertake will have the resolute and fraternal backing of France. Our commitment stems from the close relations we have with our partners to the north and the south of the Sahara. It also results from our awareness of the exceptional seriousness of the crisis, whose internal and external causes have been analysed with exemplary lucidity by the States concerned. The crisis affects almost the entire continent, which still encompasses two thirds of the world's least-advanced countries. France provides more aid to sub-Saharan Africa than any other country. Its contribution to the development of the continent as a whole has not flagged over these past years. No one should doubt that this will continue in the future.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Certain regions in the third world whose economic development has been disastrous are also victims of threats to their security, and I should like to say a few words here about the sadly telling case of Chad. The difficulties and handicaps of every kind that that country's leaders have had to face are widely known. They have once again been compounded by attempts on the part of its neighbour, Libya, at destabilization, by occupation of part of the territory and, lastly, by overt military aggression. The Government of Chad received, when it has so requested, the support of France. The aid we provided, and in particular the military assistance, was intended, while deterring Libya from pursuing its offensive activities, to prepare what will doubtless be a long and difficult road towards national reconciliation and reconstruction in Chad.

In the case of Chad, as in many other cases, the relationship between underdevelopment and insecurity and, consequently, the level of armaments, has been constantly demonstrated. Some years ago France proposed that this crucial problem as a whole should be the subject of political examination at the United Nations. Following the debates of the experts, it now remains to give concrete substance to this plan, either at the next special session of the General Assembly on disarmament or, if a consensus emerges, at a special conference to be held at an earlier date.

I should like, finally, to say a few words about the question of debt. For all too many developing countries debt has now become a dominant concern. The day-to-day effort to meet payments on due dates mobilizes all their energies. It does not permit Governments the freedom necessary to resolve their long-term development problems.

Over the past few years, there has been a great deal of consideration of this question. The very volume of such discussion shows that the international community has awakened to the seriousness and, at the same time, the complexity of

(Mr. Chirac, France)

the situation. Debt, in itself, is the consequence of the distorted development of the international economy which has brought us to the situation in which we find ourselves today.

It is for that reason that no one can any longer claim that the issue can be resolved in a purely mechanical manner by granting short-term facilities or through the simplistic application of miracle remedies. If we are to solve the problem in a lasting manner, we must tackle the root causes of the situation and not simply its effects.

The world is facing a crisis of exceptional gravity, a phase of structural adaptation in the international economy requiring greater international co-operation so that it will be more imaginative, more active and more pragmatic. I am fully aware that not everyone is convinced that this is necessary, but I think that the movement is in the right direction. France, for its part, believes that we must increase international co-operation in three areas. First, there must be increased financing for developing countries to loosen the grip of debt. I should add that there is no instance of a country that has not had to have recourse to substantial external financing during its industrialization phase. This is obvious, and in this area I note some progress, both in thinking and in conduct.

Broad agreement is now emerging on the need to expand the role and enhance the intervention capabilities of multilateral development institutions. Each of us recognizes that every other kind of financial assistance is also needed, in particular from international commercial banks and from States, in the form of aid for development and commercial credit.

With regard to bilateral aid for development, France will again increase its effort in 1987 over 1986, with a view to reaching its goal of 1 per cent of gross national product.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Secondly, the remarkable efforts to ensure economic recovery embarked on by developing countries, especially by the most heavily indebted among them, must be continued. Outstanding results have already been achieved in the battle against internal and external deficits, in curbing inflation and in implementing bold economic policies that emphasize the long-term interests of nations rather than favour illusory, fragile short-term solutions. It takes courage to set up and implement such policies, and I should like to pay tribute to those who have taken such initiatives.

A single statistic will suffice to illustrate the importance of such efforts: the balance-of-payments deficit of non-oil-exporting countries has fallen from \$73 billion in 1982 to \$29 billion in 1986.

Lastly, it is absolutely essential to correct the current disorders in the international economic and financial system. The solution to the debt problem must be based on the resumption of sustained economic growth in the world economy. This should be a key objective of the industrialized countries, which have a primary responsibility in this regard.

The progress made in the war against inflation should enable us to continue to lower real interest rates, without which any lasting solution of the debt problem would be illusory, and to continue to move towards greater stability of the international monetary system.

The correction of financial imbalances should also be actively sought. It is not a healthy situation when the world's greatest industrial country continues to drain off such a sizeable proportion of the world's savings. Nor, on the other hand, is it healthy that other major countries should accumulate surpluses when they could participate more in stimulating expansion, which is the goal towards which we must all strive.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

In this context, France welcomes the success of the Punta del Este conference and hopes that the new round of negotiations to be launched will make it possible to liberalize world trade and to strengthen solidarity among nations.

Freedom in all its dimensions - political, economic, cultural and religious - is being flouted in too many countries. War and terrorism are spreading insecurity and fear. The dignity of the human person is in jeopardy in every part of the world where hunger, poverty and violence reign.

Whatever ideologists may say, the values of dignity and freedom are inscribed in the conscience of all mankind. France, for its part, intends to defend those values wherever it is present in the world, as well as within this Organization, which would be failing in its mission if it resigned itself to compromise or impotence.

(Mr. Chirac, France)

Of all the challenges I have mentioned, two seem to me to call for a more urgent response than the others.

One is terrorism, which would take us back to a time we thought long past if we allowed it a free hand to undermine democratic societies and destroy the basic rules of international life.

The other is the critical situation of many third-world countries, particularly the least advanced among them. It is inconceivable that we should allow them to be crushed under the weight of their economic and financial difficulties - inconceivable, inhuman and irresponsible.

Over and above the problems encountered by our Organization, even in its day-to-day functioning - problems which I am convinced will be resolved - the wisdom and intelligence so often demonstrated by this Assembly encourages me, in turn, to make a confident appeal to all the Member States.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the internationalization of problems does not of itself entail international solidarity. In this regard, the development of co-operation at the regional level is an encouraging first step. Everybody knows that France in particular sets great store by intensifying its co-operation with its partners in the European Community.

The urgency of the challenges that I have just mentioned compels us to set awareness of the need for this solidarity above our economic differences and political divergences. Let us all, therefore, understand that the dangers confronting mankind are common to us all and that the only response is to be found in solidarity.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the French Republic for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Chirac, Prime Minister of the French Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. TERAN TERAN (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Government of Ecuador, it is a great pleasure for me to extend to you Sir, our congratulations on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly. It reflects just acknowledgement of your personal qualities and the determination your country has shown to co-operate in promoting the goals of our Organization.

I should like also to extend my most hearty congratulations to Ambassador de Piniés on the skilful manner in which he directed the work of the General Assembly as its President.

Similarly, I wish to express the gratitude of the Government of Ecuador for the tireless work carried out by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, whose skill and wisdom have enabled him to discharge his delicate functions with success.

Ecuador is present here during the Year of Peace, a time when the countries Members of this Organization wanted to call the attention of the Governments and peoples of the world to the value of coexistence free from violence or pressure.

Peace is a blending of universal values. It is a result of the interplay of certain realities. Peace is an objective to strive for and to be deserved. The basic ingredient of this ideal is the clear decision by citizens and Governments to live in harmony and mutual respect. Diplomacy achieves little and international organizations make small progress if we do not start from unambiguous premises: good will among men; good intention on the part of leaders; and a clear perception by everyone of one's neighbours as possessing rights which deserve the utmost respect.

This year devoted to peace, despite some effective results attained in various areas, has not been characterized by any substantial progress on the hard road of trying to turn our world towards peace.

(Mr. Teran Teran, Ecuador)

There are encouraging signs, such as when there appear forces straining for understanding in the Middle East. It is extremely encouraging to find Egypt and Israel overcoming age-old problems. The effects of the admirable solution achieved for the Beagle problem by Argentina and Chile are still vividly recalled. However, in stern contrast, we have many other universal problems that remain unresolved and a significant resurgence of violence at the hands of organizations, overt or covert, which substantially disturb the tranquillity of men and even threaten the security of States.

All ethical, cultural and political manifestations which throughout history have claimed the right of the individual human being to the respect of his neighbours and the respect of States constitute the basic pillar supporting harmony. It follows that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights did no more than give concrete form, in apt synthesis, to old aspirations of our cultures. The importance of that Declaration was that all the Member States of the United Nations consented to be bound by it. Failure to grant those rights gives rise to the individual notion of injustice, the tendency to complain, even violently; in other words, the foundations are laid for erosion of the peace.

When Pope John Paul II, in his address on 1 January 1986, proclaimed that peace must be a value without frontiers, he was voicing a profound truth springing from the human condition itself. Man, without distinction as regards frontiers, aspires to peace, because he aspires to live in surroundings where all recognize his body of rights inherent in the human condition.*

* Mr. Gurinovich (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Teran Teran, Ecuador)

Legal concepts relating to human rights must revert to the ethical purity that they have been losing over the past few years, devastated by political accommodation or ideological compromise.

It has become acceptable for many to recognize differences in type among human beings and to accept the rights of some being maintained and substantiated within a narrow framework in which greater scope is given to might and less to human dignity. At the same time, other human beings are subjected to a strict scale of values which we hope can be made stricter still, but only on condition that it be universal. This distinction, sometimes subtle and sometimes clear-cut, is conferred by the political alignments or ideologies practised by Governments.

Ecuador does not admit such a double standard. Ecuador reiterates the historical need to acknowledge that all men, regardless of latitude, cultural level or economic development, have the elementary rights which mankind has declared to be inherent in the human condition.

Ecuador maintains that States must contain their coercive force within the solid wall of respect for all human beings and will not tire of proclaiming this universality of rights until they find effective expression in our complex and sometimes confused world.

While the inalienable rights of human beings command the respect of men and States, the right of the peoples to choose together the form of Government and the authorities they choose is another essential principle for the maintenance of peace.

Violence is used in a large part of the world to prevent peoples from having access to appropriate means of choosing an organizational system. And still in a large part of the world citizens are persistently denied the right to vote.

(Mr. Teran Teran, Ecuador)

The self-determination of peoples is an unassailable principle and is essential to world harmony. It is also a reality that could be improved upon in many States. In my own country, we still have some way to go before the citizen's right to choose his leaders is fully recognized. Our Constitution contains a limitation - which the present Government has tried unsuccessfully, alas, to eliminate - whereby the right to be elected is conditional upon membership of a political party. The voter thereby loses the possibility of electing many people because they are not members of political parties, but who may merit the citizen's trust in public office.

But, while there is room for improvement in countries that apply the principle of self-determination, there are unfortunately other countries where the possibility of self-determination is growing increasingly rare and where there is persistent denial of that principle.

The interdependence that growing intercommunication creates among human beings is gradually making survival impossible for societies in which political domination deprives men of the right to self-rule.

The rule of might over men, the imposition of an institution which may be backed by the force of arms but not by the will of the masses, is gradually becoming a historical anachronism. It is the duty of statesmen to understand that such systems, however much they may stress the sovereignty of a mandate, will never be able to claim democracy or the support of the will of the majority. And clear-sighted statesmen must also understand that the tendency is for the world to free itself from such systems and to claim, even through recourse to violent means, the effective expression of something that emanates from the human condition itself.

Thus, the occupation of territories by force becomes daily less admissible.

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The withdrawal of foreign forces from any territory directly or indirectly under occupation by a foreign army is a categorical imperative, no matter what the continent or what justification be claimed for the maintenance of such a situation of violence.

The self-determination of peoples has a rather political connotation. It is oriented towards the active exercise of political rights by human beings in a given community. But, over and above that right, today's world demands effective recognition of the right of national communities to development.

Development does not automatically mean wealth. Development means an evolutionary process that makes possible increasing satisfaction of the needs of human beings, families and communities. Development means the individual and collective right to acquire cultural values, to pursue a dignified material life and gradually to participate actively in the life of the society. Development means that the individual can hope for gradual improvement and the assurance that the Government will co-operate with the individual to that end, without impediment of any kind. But development also means - and this is a concept that seems to recede further every day - that the international community should take note of the simultaneous, common need for that phenomenon to take place all over the world.

It is natural that not all communities will achieve the same degree of development, but it is also an inescapable truth that the development of some cannot continue at the expense of the vast majority.

The world of today, particularly the richer countries and those that have the most influence in the international community, must, for the sake of common survival, orient their economic and social policies in such a way as to rescue those peoples whose condition is obviously deteriorating. There are whole blocs of countries - one might even say continents and subcontinents - where the gradual

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decline in the quality of life has become a persistent problem and has grown so extreme as to blunt the perceptions of many of those who are responsible for the international economic and political phenomena.

We cannot stand idly by faced with the tragedy taking place in many African countries. There are not only an international financial crisis and increasingly unfavourable terms of trade, but also the gradual destruction of the environment and natural resources. This must serve to single out many African countries as subjects of the most urgent international concern.

The world cannot deny its responsibility, because it encouraged the process of decolonization, which was, and still is, a notable step forward in historical development. It must appreciate the new collective responsibility in a situation where lack of awareness cannot be countenanced.

As part of the right to development, the enjoyment of natural resources with equal benefit to the countries concerned, is essential. Ecuador supports the need for co-operation between the country with sovereignty over a resource and the country that may have the technology to exploit it, between the country that provides the manpower and the country that invests its capital and technology. We cannot have neither miserly withholding of a resource, which is then unused and brings no benefit to mankind, nor wanton exploitation, which, while of maximum benefit to one party, causes the depletion of the resource and deterioration of the environment.

In the same context, we consider that the Convention on the Law of the Sea is one of the most important contributions to international law in the past 30 years. Ecuador, together with other countries making up the South Pacific Commission, contributed to this development. It hopes to continue to initiate sound projects for reclamation of the natural rights of peoples from whom marine resources have

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been taken, without underestimating the degree of international co-operation needed, in order to bring them into the service of the international community.

With regard to outer space, the position of Ecuador concerning its use and that of the geostationary orbit and its frequency spectrum stems from the same understanding. The peaceful use of those resources for the benefit of all States must be a permanent goal, while bearing in mind the special right to development of developing countries and equatorial countries.

The summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries has just taken place in Zimbabwe. Ecuador is a member of the Movement. Twenty-five years ago, when the Movement started, its founding fathers stressed two attitudes towards the great Powers - independence and autonomy.

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Non-alignment represented a historic response to the great Powers trend to set up hegemonistic blocs, binding to themselves specific groups of client countries. They lost their independence, faced with the might of the Powers and ceased to direct their destinies by themselves.

The history of the world was itself turning into a play between two or three hegemonies, around which several dozen satellite States gravitated helplessly.

This concept of the world was bound to generate a series of negative consequences. Among them, the tendency for each bloc to protect itself, to restrict access or the presence of other blocs, to create a politico-economic enclosure, to fragment the world into vertical blocs, from North to South.

To break out of this unrelenting pattern, to develop the national personality, to overcome ideological prejudice, to maintain open relations with any sector or group of countries, such was the indispensable historic counterpart.

The destiny of non-alignment had to be such as it is. Unfortunately, the spirit of the Movement has hesitated on many occasions. Attempts have been made to turn it into a club of poor countries, against rich countries. At other times, and in flagrant contradiction with the essence of the Movement, the antithesis has been sought: alignment with specific blocs; more than alignment: true alienation.

Ecuador proclaims, as it did in Harare, that it is essential to reclaim the original spirit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in the ethical, juridical and political sense.

Non-alignment does not mean loathing or violence; it does not mean verbiage bristling with epithets; it does not mean perennial and repetitive allegations against certain countries in the Western world. Starting from the concept of the sovereign equality of States, non-alignment means having an independent and open attitude, free from prejudice and antagonism, upholding the right of peoples not to

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be swallowed up into huge, ironbound blocs of influence. Our Government will not rest until this international reality is restored.

With regard to disarmament, few issues have such immediacy and importance as this.

Although the right of every country to maintain a force to ensure internal order and the integrity of its sovereignty is undisputable, nevertheless the enormous size of this force constitutes an unmistakable path to provocation, confrontation and conflict.

The disproportion of forces in various areas or regions, inevitably produces situations of injustice and displaces the rule of law. In view of these considerations, disarmament must be seen as a multiple process. Disproportionate spending on weapons or other military items means impairing the peoples' ability to strive for economic and social improvement.

In those regions where there is an obvious disproportion in military forces, it is essential to set up real and effective systems for disarmament. The international community, the United Nations, must assume the task of promoting disarmament conventions, under effective international control, that go beyond a mere freeze of the arms race.

The case of the great Powers deserves special attention. Ecuador encourages their continuing to deal with each other in order to come closer to true systems of disarmament. It is not through dramatic gestures that the arms race between the Powers will be curbed. There must be binding agreement, brought about not merely by their own conviction, but also by the growing moral pressure of the international community.

The development of atomic weapons must particularly attract the attention of all peace-loving peoples. Atomic energy should be directed towards peaceful ends.

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Ecuador is particularly concerned about the atomic tests which threaten nature's balance on Earth.

Just as the countries of Latin America did in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, our Government considers it appropriate for the international community to expand the scope and the concept of nuclear-free zones. The Pacific Ocean in particular, that huge sea whose very name originated from the strong impression of peace which it made on its discoverer, must become a nuclear-free zone. The Pacific is the sea where relations of the future will more significantly gravitate. This sea, which links the coasts of America to those of the age-old continent of Asia and of the very new continent of Australia, is bound to emerge not only as a zone with a clear economic destiny, but as a zone in which juridical values are invested with special character aimed at the affirmation and reaffirmation of peace.

The very serious issue of the foreign debt has made little progress over the last year. Developing countries in particular are, to a greater or lesser degree, the victims of this acute problem of our times. The countries' massive foreign indebtedness was not due to chance, nor was it a concerted attitude on the part of the debtors.

While it must be acknowledged, and in the case of my own country I do so openly, that one of the components of the foreign debt was the application of erroneous economic policies, the joint responsibility of the creditor countries and of the multilateral agencies is unquestionable. Many countries, mine among them, believed in and practised illusory policies of development promotion, based on an increase of bureaucratic costs, together with a type of protectionism favouring barely profitable activities which consumed a good part of national energy. The immediate consequence of this mistaken concept was to use up not only the capacity of internal savings and local indebtedness, but also to draw on the resources of

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international borrowing to finance growing expenses and to bridge the balance-of-payments gap. Moreover, international lending agencies and creditor Governments fueled this indebtedness. Their main motivation was probably the recycling of resources emanating from the increase in the price of oil.

When, through a consistent policy of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, oil prices began to rise, a transfer of resources from oil importing countries, developed and developing alike, to oil-producing countries took place. These incremental resources are caught by the international banking system which seeks to place them not only within the traditional private group of clients, but also in a new market: that of Governments, including the Governments of developing countries. This policy reached its climax in 1982 when the debtor countries' ability to pay came to an end.

The solution which was found was to compel the debtor countries to make severe readjustments in their economies to ensure effective margins for the repayment of the debt, at the expense of the countries's own development. Initial steps consisted in reducing import capacity, with the recessionary effects this entails; and the next step, when this policy could no longer be maintained, was to encourage a rescheduling of the debt, on a case by case basis.

Ecuador, with a relatively high per capita foreign debt, was able to renegotiate its debt over several years with the creditor countries and banks. This renegotiation meant committing about 30 per cent of foreign exchange earnings to debt amortization.

When Ecuador's economy seemed to have adjusted to this new circumstance and international trade started to flow again, a new dramatic event occurred: oil prices suddenly fell.

This time, resource transfers went in the opposite direction. Oil-producing countries, nearly all of them developing countries, transferred resources in 1986

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to the consumer countries worth approximately \$80 billion. It should be noted that the privileged countries enjoy this benefit in direct proportion to their consumption. Thus, developed countries receive more than 80 per cent of this transfer of resources, while the advantage is greatly reduced for the consumer of developing countries.

My country lost a third of its export earnings in 1986. This has forced it to make new readjustments in its economy. These readjustments have been made on the basis of safeguarding the autonomy of foreign trade, the basis for the free market quotations of foreign currency earned by private exports and those needed for private imports; while oil earnings, whatever the fluctuations of the price of the product, remain earmarked to pay for the State's expenditures, including amortization of the debt.

But, apart from the way in which our country is facing up to its own problem, the basic drama remains.

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The debtor countries cannot be condemned to a permanent state of uncertainty and discouragement. Peoples cannot live without logic and hope. However great the effort they may have to make, peoples must glimpse a more promising future.

The creditor countries and the multilateral bodies must realize that a basic solution to the debt issue has to be found; that the distressed peoples are moving headlong towards undesirable consequences; that many Governments, unable to find viable solutions, are even yielding to wishful thinking, opting for what appears to be a remedy, but is not.

It must be understood that the scope of the tragedy is not financial, but rather political and historical; and that the bloc of debtor countries, not as a club of conspirators set against the creditor countries, but as a group having common, identified needs, will seek solutions, realistic or unrealistic, but in some way different from what the international financial conclaves may have supposed.

The tragedy of the debt is directly linked to the tragedy of international trade, and consideration of the latter issue is most timely now that a round of negotiations by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is taking place in Montevideo.

The foreign debt must be paid, for reasons of international ethics. But payment is impossible unless there is a rise in the exports of the debtor countries. To increase exports, internal adjustments in the economic policies of the countries are admittedly required. Nevertheless, all efforts are useless as long as the developed world does not abandon its protectionist policy.

Protectionism imposes a heavy burden on the national communities which subsidize the high cost of producing certain goods; and at the same time, it is unfair and prejudicial to the countries that could produce them more economically.

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This is one of the hardest things for Latin America to bear. On other continents, our products are discriminated against; and no hegemonic bloc applies any kind of protectionist formula in our favour. In other words, the system brings us nothing but harm.

I think I can make this plea for the abolition of protectionism, since my country implements a free market economic policy. We have no restrictions or subsidies. Access to foreign currency is free and we do not use any mechanism to compensate exporters for the lower prices of exported goods. Thus we can, with full objectivity, call for the gradual but definite abolition of a protectionism which is causing the selective impoverishment of certain areas of the world without, in the medium term, benefiting any country.

The Government of Ecuador believes that terrorism and the drug traffic are two collective threats that are interlinked. The huge resources which the drug traffic can generate and the hidden, dark force bred by terrorism mesh together and encourage each other. Our Government believes that terrorism and drug trafficking represent two special types of crimes, whose characteristics identify them as crimes against mankind. Both threaten indiscriminately, imprecisely, generically. They both cross boundaries; they both use international resources; they both operate and strike simultaneously in many parts of the world. It is essential that the international community act in concert to combat them.

In accordance with the Quito Declaration against Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, of 11 August 1984, and with the statement of May 1985 of the United Nations Secretary-General, the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking has been called for June 1987. Ecuador, which as of 1986 is a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, endorses its view that traffic in narcotic

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drugs must be declared a crime against humanity, and the sinister symbiotic relationship it bears with terrorism must be acknowledged.

The agenda for the forty-first session of the General Assembly contains an item relating to measures to be taken to prevent international terrorism. Last year, on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, and in accordance with resolution 40/61, the General Assembly unequivocally condemned and qualified as criminal all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, wherever and by whomever committed, including those which jeopardize friendly relations among States and their security. In endorsing those criteria, we renew our appeal to qualify terrorism also as a crime against humanity.

Crimes against humanity are to be dealt with under special norms of international criminal law. Specific shelters granted to other types of crimes would have to be restricted or eliminated in the cases of crimes against humanity. Special norms on extradition should emanate from an international consensus. And let there be no confusion between terrorism and the policies, however repressive, of certain States that combat it. Attempts are made to effect an ideological shift aimed at blurring the clear, repulsive outlines of terrorism, seeking to give the same name to the sometimes extreme conduct which may occasionally be adopted to punish the crime.

In no manner can the immoderate use of force be excused, nor the denial of the fundamental rights of human beings, nor the withdrawal of persons and things from the natural jurisdiction of their judges. But between this and the mixing and confusing of ideas, there is a wide gap which is bridged with ideological and grammatical twists. Terrorism, the action aimed at intimidating, by use of fear, to compel or restrain, so that societies lose their tranquillity and the centre of gravity of their own destiny, is something that has no excuse whatsoever. Ecuador

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is ready to co-operate openly and frankly with other countries of the world for the condemnation and eradication of this atrocity of our century.

There have not been any favourable developments with regard to the tragedy in Central America in the last few months. The disproportionate size of the armies and of the stock of weapons, the immoderate and open intervention of several Powers within the area, and the continued and deplorable installation of certain totalitarian systems keep on aggravating the tensions in that stricken area of our Americas. Ecuador deeply regrets, out of continental solidarity, out of Latin American spirit, out of its perception of a geopolitical threat, this tragedy for which a remedy has not yet been found.

All and any of the resources of international law are appropriate for the solution of the problem. There is no exclusive forum, nor action that enjoys exclusive rights. All the resources that international law can bring to bear must be used to solve the Central American tragedy. In the end, so long as democracy does not find true and effective expression, so long as there is no elimination of the practice of forcibly compelling peoples to accept régimes that they have not themselves freely chosen, so long as it is impossible for many to live in their own country, dominated by tyrannical elements, peace will be a distant and almost contradictory aspiration. Peace has to come from the existence of justice and law, not from the blind imposition of force ruling over the actions and even the conscience of people.

The international community, the regional and ad hoc forums, as well as the Contadora Group itself will have to exert strong pressure to eliminate the causes of war or guerrillas in the Central American and to restore in the area the effective validity of the peoples' rights to self-determination, of democratic systems and of non-intervention.

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The Government of Ecuador, faithful to its traditional policy of firm commitment to the rule of law in relations among States, convinced of the need to contribute to the reinforcement of a creative peace that would enable all peoples to satisfy their legitimate aspirations for progress and well-being, renews its decision to foster and strengthen friendly relations with the Governments of neighbouring countries, in order to contribute to the well-being of their peoples, with whom they are destined to be closely linked; and to create the climate for a just, peaceful and honourable solution to the territorial problem, within a framework of mutual co-operation.

Ecuador reiterates its belief in the validity of the efforts that the United Nations is making to improve conditions in the international community. What has not yet been achieved must not discourage such efforts. A positive achievement shows that joint participation in forums in which the legal equality of States is recognized, is an indispensable mechanism of civilized coexistence.

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Ecuador hopes that all States of the world which aspire to membership in the United Nations may accede to it. Particularly noteworthy is the case of South Korea, a country whose justifiable desire to joining the Organization should not be blocked by the position of third parties.

We also support all principles or practices to eliminate discrimination against individuals. Race, religion, political conviction, age or sex should not be used as reasons for depriving individuals of certain rights or benefits. We therefore support the efforts of the international community to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Of special interest is the effort to reinforce the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes. For a number of reasons we consider useful the proposal to establish a commission of good offices, mediation and conciliation. And we are also encouraged to learn that the Secretariat is preparing a draft manual for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Organization must keep progress in the field of women's rights under review. Ecuadorean legislation has eliminated all discrimination against women. The ever-increasing presence of women in the professional world, in the scientific community and in political life, is helping our society to incorporate or further emphasize the values which women seem to hold particularly dear. My country has been active in applying the strategies designed to further the advancement of women between now and the year 2000, adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. It has also acted with particular diligence in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and in the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

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Finally, I wish to make a special reference to an international principle which my Government considers to be the backbone of the civilized and peaceful development of our times. I am speaking of the freedom of the press. We must gradually make progress in the world's ability to inform and comment regularly, using all means of mass communication, without restrictions or pressure, without interference from the State or other such quarters. There are still many countries that do not recognize the need to consider this principle, that limit the freedom to express opinions and comment, that exercise control, on the basis of what is seen as the official truth, the citizens' right to receive true and prompt information, and the right of the thinking man and the journalist to exercise their informational abilities.

Ecuador is confident that these still considerable barriers may be brought down, gradually but firmly. Ecuador itself regards it as a duty to follow those principles which safeguard the unrestricted freedom of the press and the practical application of that principle. A diversified, broad and entirely free informational community is one of the traditional requirements of life in Ecuador and one of the reasons for the climate of peace and the constantly increasing emphasis on progress which has always been characteristic of our country.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.