

**REPORT
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE
WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 1 (A/41/1)



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New York, 1986

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

In 1985, the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations was marked with a far-reaching and rigorous examination of the role the Organization has played during 40 years of epochal change. While opinions differed as to the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of the Organization, there was notable unanimity in acknowledging the continuing validity of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the need to strengthen the United Nations so that it might better meet the needs of the future. In my own statement to the Commemorative Session I suggested that the impressive observance of the anniversary had set the stage for a fresh beginning in efforts to overcome stalemates on major issues and in strengthening that structure for international co-operation which is the United Nations. I cautioned, however, that devotion to the principles of the Charter needed to express itself in concrete action and not only in rhetoric.

Regrettably, in marked contrast to sentiments expressed during the fortieth anniversary, 1986 has witnessed the United Nations subjected to a severe crisis challenging its solvency and viability. Precisely at the time when renewed efforts have been called for to strengthen the Organization, its work has been shadowed by financial difficulties resulting primarily from the failure of Member States to meet obligations flowing from the Charter. It is essential to lift this cloud so that the United Nations can, both now and in the longer term, be that strong constructive force in world affairs that is vitally needed in our increasingly interdependent world. The strengthening and revitalization of the present structure of multilateral institutions is critical to the resolution of problems confronting the international community relating to peace, security and development. To ignore this necessity is to imperil the future prospects of a better world.

Various factors have contributed to the present difficulties of many multilateral organizations. We are still adjusting to the new and uneasy distribution of forces in the world resulting from the Second World War, from the revolution of decolonization, from demographic and technological changes, from the mixed patterns of global development and, of course, from the advent of nuclear weapons. The United Nations is representative of this complexity, often simplistically explained in terms of the "North" and "South", "East" and "West" or the "Third, Second and First Worlds". The United Nations should be, and is, a central element in bringing, through peaceful means, the necessary adjustments in the precarious relationships involved. The intractability of many problems, however, and the altered structure of the world community have given rise in some quarters to a sense of considerable frustration and even a misplaced nostalgia for earlier and simpler times. A trend has been evident towards unilateralism and away from the emphasis on multilateral problem-solving characteristic of the post-War period.

The United Nations system has not always been effective in counteracting such tendencies. Nor has there been the kind of intense international crisis, such as we last faced in 1973, which reminds Member States of the crucial value of the United Nations in times of Great Power confrontation. Yet in a world where the destinies of all countries are almost certain to become ever more closely linked, there can be no

substitute for an effective multilateral system in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the co-operative management of global problems. It is in looking ahead at the characteristics of the future world society as they are now emerging that we can most clearly perceive the increasing need for effectively structured multilateral co-operation.

For this reason, I believe that the present time should be propitious for renewal and revitalization of the international system. The upheavals and fundamental changes of the post-War decades have begun to settle into a more discernible and coherent pattern. For all the differences of ideology and practice, we are witnessing the emergence of a widening constituency of basically pragmatic Governments with a firm grasp of the economic, social and technological characteristics of our time as well as of its more traditional political and military aspects. I believe that this constituency can, and will, play an important part in the rationalization and strengthening of the multilateral system. This, moreover, by unanimous decision of the General Assembly, is the International Year of Peace, a major purpose of which is to encourage the strengthening of the United Nations as a central element in assuring peace in the coming decades.

In this perspective, I believe it useful to look ahead, in this final report of my five-year term as Secretary-General, and to examine the performance and the potential of the United Nations in terms of those present problems which are likely to endure and of the new demands which the future will pose.

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If we are to rise to the challenge of the future, it is surely of the highest importance to bring to an early end those conflicts which have long brought terrible tragedy to the countries and people directly involved and inhibited the growth of international confidence needed for the resolution of broader global problems.

Let us look briefly at the conflict situations of 1986:

In the Middle East, despite efforts from many sides to advance the search for a just and lasting settlement, there is at present an alarming absence of a generally acceptable and active negotiating process. Experience shows all too clearly that such a stalemate encourages resort to extremism and risks the recurrence of wider violence. A way must be found to initiate, as soon as possible, a negotiating process with the participation of all concerned. I still believe that the machinery of the United Nations, suitably adapted if necessary, can be a useful and acceptable framework for this purpose. There is now a wide measure of agreement that peace in the Middle East can best be achieved through a comprehensive settlement that would cover all aspects of the conflict, including the question of Palestine. This, and the common ground in the various proposals that have been made, should provide the basis for substantive negotiations.

The United Nations has, of course, been intensively engaged in the Middle East in an effort to maintain some degree of stability and thus promote the achievement of a settlement. This effort has not been without heavy cost. During the current year, the United Nations peace-keeping force in Lebanon has pursued its duties under constant and

growing danger. Brave soldiers have lost their lives as they carried out their mission of peace. I wish to pay tribute to the dedication, fortitude and discipline of the contingents of all the peace-keeping forces in the region and to express appreciation to all the countries that have contributed soldiers and logistic support to these operations. These forces serve a vital purpose: they serve to reduce and mitigate violence and to create, or preserve conditions in which peace may be sought. Their sacrifices impose an obligation on all of the parties concerned to work constructively and compassionately for stability and peace in the region, an obligation that includes refraining from hostile actions and co-operating unreservedly with the peace-keeping forces in the service of the mandates entrusted to them by the Security Council. It is particularly important at this difficult time that these peace-keeping operations should continue to receive the support of the Security Council—in particular, of all its permanent members. I would add that the vital work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has also had to be carried out under extremely difficult circumstances. The work has gone ahead, however, as it must, and continues to merit, and need, the financial support of all States.

The United Nations continues to be engaged in intensive efforts towards a negotiated solution of the situation relating to Afghanistan. While valuable progress has been made, I must emphasize that delays in the successful conclusion of these negotiations can only aggravate the suffering of the Afghan people. Political decisions of considerable importance have to be taken if this diplomatic process is to yield positive results. Such results would also favourably affect a far wider range of international relationships.

The Secretary-General's long-standing good offices on the Cyprus problem have reached a critical stage. It has not been possible, however, to take the steps towards a settlement that were suggested in the draft framework agreement that I presented to the parties this past spring. Various recent events and the absence of forward movement have regrettably contributed to an increase of tension on the island. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus plays a vital role in keeping this under control. To assure this role as long as it may be required, it is essential that a satisfactory solution be found to the Force's financial difficulties. Meanwhile, I expect to meet with both sides during the forthcoming weeks and I sincerely hope that we will find a way to build upon the enormous amount of work devoted to the search for an overall solution of this problem.

The United Nations has also been extensively involved in the efforts undertaken at various levels to resolve the question of Kampuchea and improve the situation in South-East Asia as a whole. These efforts have not so far met with success, although the humanitarian assistance extended by the Organization has done much to alleviate the plight of the Kampuchean people. Last year, I visited the region with the objective of encouraging progress towards a comprehensive political settlement. Since then, some convergence has emerged on the basic objectives of such a settlement, but significant differences persist on the ways to achieve them and on the procedure for negotiations. I believe that there can be no military solution. Confrontation must ultimately give way to a process of genuine negotiations without pre-conditions. I am also convinced that, with the co-operation of those concerned, the good offices of the Secretary-General can be used to facilitate the initiation of this process and contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in this region that has endured such long suffering.

The situation in Central America has steadily deteriorated with the increasing intrusion of conflicting ideologies, the attempts to impose unilateral solutions to the problems of the region and the resort to force. The tireless efforts of

the Contadora Group, with the more recent backing of the Support Group, have helped in preventing the outbreak of a generalized conflict, but agreement which would bring peace to the region is yet to be achieved. I believe that only by insulating the Central American situation from the East-West conflict and seeking a Latin American solution that takes account of the economic and social needs of the area can a genuine settlement be achieved. This requires the support of all countries with interests in the region.

The prolonged war between Iran and Iraq, with its mounting and fearful toll of young lives, is a source of deep distress and of perilous tensions in the region. It poses, too, an ever-present risk of expansion. The United Nations has been able to lessen to some extent the cruellest aspects of this conflict. It has not, however, found the means to bring the war to an end. I recall with gratitude, in this connection, the dedicated service of the late Olof Palme who did all in his power as representative of the Secretary-General to restore peace. Unflagging efforts must continue towards that objective, but far-sightedness on both sides constitutes a decisive and inescapable condition for the success of such efforts.

The United Nations is frequently criticized for failing to prevent or end the conflicts I have mentioned, as well as the many others that have broken out since its establishment. Such criticism often fails to take account of the most useful work done by the United Nations in helping to limit the expansion of conflict and in providing the possibility for negotiations or debate, which can reduce the inclination towards armed exchange. Still, there is no doubt that the inability of the United Nations to avoid, or resolve, many of the armed conflicts between Member States seriously affects the credibility of the Organization in the eyes of the public on whose support the vitality of the United Nations ultimately depends. No serious assessment of the potential of the Organization for the future can omit this basic shortcoming and the reasons for it.

I have sought in my previous annual reports to the General Assembly to suggest measures which might make the United Nations—and one must speak in this regard primarily of the Security Council—more effective in dealing with the threat, as well as the reality, of armed conflict. Essentially two requirements must be met: first, the permanent members of the Security Council, especially the two most powerful, must perceive that, notwithstanding bilateral differences and distrust, it is in their national interest to co-operate within the Security Council and, within this framework, to apply their collective influence to the resolution of regional disputes. Secondly, all Member States must perceive in far greater measure that the existence of an authoritative and representative international organ capable of maintaining peace and security is in their individual as well as the common interest and that, therefore, its decisions must be respected.

Both of these aims, of course, would be achieved through universal compliance with the provisions and intent of the Charter. We have thus seen the fortunate outcome when, recently, two Member States, France and New Zealand, in faithful accord with Chapter VI of the Charter, turned to the United Nations Secretary-General for assistance in resolving a dispute that had seriously disrupted their relations. Earlier, in the spirit of this same Chapter, two permanent members of the Security Council, China and the United Kingdom, in statesmanlike fashion, reached a far-sighted agreement on the future of Hong Kong. I believe, too, that the co-operative efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in seeking a settlement to the Western Sahara problem, as recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 40/50 of 2 December 1985, show the value of expanded collaboration between regional or-

ganizations and the United Nations in dealing with regional disputes.

The General Assembly, of course, also has an important role in developing the conditions for regional and global peace. In order to enhance its effectiveness in the years that lie ahead, some modification in the Assembly's own working methods may be desirable. It is, I believe, the general experience that the important purposes of the Assembly under the Charter are seldom served by intemperate rhetoric or excessive repetition. The Presidents of the General Assembly who met on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary agreed on most practical suggestions which the Assembly should seriously consider and act upon.

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The common well-being of the world's population will depend heavily in the remaining years of this century on the success achieved in global development and in the reduction of the disparity in the conditions of life within the international community. The adverse effects of inadequate development will not be limited in the future to the poorer countries. It will be increasingly universal. For instance, we see at present the wide impact of the external debt problem. Solutions are needed in the interest of creditor and debtor nations alike. The problem has unavoidable human dimensions in both. To take another example, it is already evident that high population growth in areas of limited employment opportunities will encourage, and even impel, massive migration to areas offering better expectations. In an eventuality of this nature the stability of the developing and of the developed countries becomes ever more interdependent.

As this interdependence is increasingly recognized, it has resulted paradoxically in some ambivalence with regard to multilateral economic co-operation. Many countries feel that greater interdependence results in diminished control over their own destinies. The balance of interests among domestic groups can be, and has been, disturbed by the very rapidity with which interdependence has grown. These currents are reflected in the difficulties being encountered by multilateral organizations in dealing with the very serious problems of the global economy. But the problems of interdependence will neither go away nor lend themselves to unilateral handling. If the world economy is to return and hold to the path of healthy and well-spread growth and development, policy and systemic measures are necessary in the interrelated areas of money, finance, debt and trade.

These measures can only be successfully planned and implemented on a multilateral basis. Therefore the role of multilateral organizations is bound to be of critical importance. This imposes on them a heavy responsibility to combine their capacities in co-ordinated programmes. The Economic and Social Council, in accordance with its mandate under the Charter, needs to take the lead in assuring the co-ordinated application of resources to the most urgent economic problems on both a global and regional basis. I would emphasize in this connection that, while there are specialized forums to deal with sectoral issues, the role of the United Nations is unique and important: it provides a universal forum in which these issues can be considered in an interrelated manner within a comprehensive context; and it can provide, if correctly utilized, the necessary political impulse for concerted action by States.

In order to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to exercise clear leadership in the economic area, it would be extremely helpful if Member States could agree on a practical means of identifying those issues which are relatively more important and timely for intergovernmental consideration. In this way the dissipation of attention and resources

that occurs at present in repetitive deliberations in the United Nations on an ever-expanding range of issues could be avoided. I would suggest, with this in mind, that consideration be given to convening a short ministerial session of the Economic and Social Council to identify the subjects in the economic field that should receive priority attention during a given period of time. Should such a meeting be held, I believe it will be useful to keep in mind the large degree of consensus which now exists on practical ways of revitalizing development and accelerating growth. Specific policies and measures which would achieve these objectives should be identified and agreed upon. In this regard, I am gratified to note that Governments are proceeding constructively in preparations for the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

The recent special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa showed in a most positive way the results that can be achieved through multilateral co-operation when commonly agreed objectives are brought into a cohesive multilateral approach. The necessary follow-up action to this session must be pursued energetically by Governments as well as intergovernmental bodies. If this is done, there is every reason to expect that the present disparity between growth rates in Africa and the other regions of the world will be substantially reduced before the end of the century. In opening up this prospect the United Nations has decisively demonstrated both the special potential of multilateral co-operation on a broad problem transcending national boundaries and its capacity, as a universal Organization, to mobilize such co-operation now and in the future.

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The continuing technological revolution has brought change to almost all aspects of human existence. It provides hope that the essential global development to which I have alluded can be achieved. But it also raises the profound question of whether the international community has the aggregate ability to manage safely, and to common advantage, the inventions of the human mind. The United Nations needs here to pursue three broad objectives: to assist in bringing the relevant new technologies to all countries where they can be of use in promoting development; to encourage the widest possible co-operation in dealing with the dangers as well as the advantages inherent in technological advances; and to provide the multilateral structure for the management of possible adverse consequences of the new technologies, which may affect the international community as a whole. There have been promising multilateral achievements in each of these areas. They should be pursued and expanded.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which throughout its existence has demonstrated the effectiveness of multilateral co-operation in promoting and monitoring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, this year is playing an essential role in enhancing international co-operation in the field of nuclear safety to prevent nuclear accidents or mitigate the effects should such an accident occur. Government experts completed by consensus this August two draft conventions on early notification and emergency mutual assistance for adoption at a special session of the General Conference of IAEA. There have been suggestions that the role and activities of IAEA in nuclear safety be strengthened and expanded. I believe this merits early, positive consideration. Not unrelated is the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which will take place in March of 1987 under the favourable auspices of recently intensified contacts on this subject.

New technologies have brought with them the reality of human activities in outer space and on the deep sea-bed, which until recently were largely isolated from human use. The very absence of national borders affords a special opportunity for multilateral understandings on the peaceful utilization of these vast areas in ways that will serve the common good. It is noteworthy in this connection that this year, for the first time in several years, substantial progress was made in the development of an international political and legal framework for using outer space for global development. The set of legal principles relating to remote sensing from space, which will be before the present session of the General Assembly for adoption, should promote the use of space technology for developing and protecting our natural resources and ensure that all countries have access to that technology for their own economic and social advancement. This agreement represents a small but encouraging step towards a spirit of co-operation in a field which has been primarily a scene of confrontation and distrust for some years.

In a comparable way, the International Seabed Authority, for which preparations are going forward, can make possible the utilization of new technology for the future exploitation of the mineral resources of the deep sea-bed to the common global advantage.

Outer space and the deep sea-bed have until now been kept free from nuclear deployment. This is a major achievement of multilateral diplomacy and, I would add, of human wisdom. It should under no circumstances be jeopardized.

The operational agencies of the United Nations, while generally experiencing reduced resource availability, have continued to bring the benefits of technology to the developing countries. The significant increase in the number of development programmes and projects executed at the request of Member States by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, especially in areas at the frontier of technology, is a welcome indication of the importance attributed by Member States to moving ahead in this area. It is generally recognized, I believe, that transnational corporations can also play a positive role in bringing advanced technology to developing countries. There continues to be a need, however, for a multilaterally agreed code of conduct to assure that the interests of the host countries as well as of the corporations are protected. Member States are now close to agreement on a text. I would urge that the necessary final effort for agreement be made quickly on a fair and mutually advantageous basis.

These examples of United Nations activity relating to modern technology suggest its future potential in accomplishing the three objectives I have listed. Our purpose must be sustained and unswerving: technological advances must be so used as to serve peaceful ends and to meet the widest possible human needs.

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The advent of nuclear weapons very evidently represents something more than one aspect of a technological revolution. Nuclear weapons have defined a new age of profound anxiety. As long as they exist, nuclear weapons will entail the risk of totally unacceptable destruction to life and to human achievement. The goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, on which all Member States have agreed, must be upheld and energetically pursued. Pending its realization, the risk inherent in the existence of nuclear weapons must be progressively decreased through drastic reduction in the numbers and destructive content of nuclear arms; through limitations on their deployment and further development; and through the complete prohibition of nuclear testing.

It is evident that only the nuclear-weapon States themselves, especially the two most powerful, can take the basic decisions required for the limitation and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Through the possession of these weapons, they have assumed a grave responsibility towards humanity as a whole, which, through their use, could be destroyed. I believe that, in welcoming the continuing high-level discussion between the Soviet Union and the United States on various aspects of nuclear disarmament, the international community can justifiably expect that they will be pursued with a full sense of this awesome responsibility.

Given their importance for the entire world community, issues of nuclear disarmament also require multilateral study and negotiation just as do those in the non-nuclear field. The question of nuclear testing, in particular a comprehensive test ban, must continue to be dealt with on a priority basis in the Conference on Disarmament. Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons merit, and are, I believe, receiving high priority. I shall not review here the many other disarmament questions of vital importance that are on the Conference's agenda. Rather, I should like to put forward for the consideration of the Assembly the following points with regard to the role and capacity of the United Nations over the coming years in this most crucial field:

The Conference on Disarmament affords a uniquely representative negotiating forum, which is essential for the completion of multilateral disarmament agreements. It will serve the world well in the future, as it has in the past, if it continues to receive the high-level attention and expert participation of Member States.

The work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs in defining common attitudes, mobilizing support and providing analyses in the disarmament field will also remain of high importance. There is, however, a risk to which I have pointed before, that the impact of the Assembly's efforts will be reduced through lack of focus and inadequate economy in their execution. The United Nations influence will be enhanced if discussions in its various disarmament forums can be so organized as to minimize duplication and reduce the number of resolutions.

As indicated in my last annual report, the ability of the Organization to assist in verification and compliance arrangements should be explored both in the nuclear and non-nuclear fields. As a related step in the interest of international security, I would suggest that consideration be given to the establishment of a multilateral nuclear alert centre to reduce the risk of fatal misinterpretation of unintentional nuclear launchings or, in the future, the chilling possibility of isolated launchings by those who may clandestinely gain access to nuclear devices.

Finally, a further means of achieving practical disarmament is through agreements on the expansion of denuclearized areas and of areas not used for military purposes. Any moves in the opposite direction, which would bring military deployment where it does not now exist, can only have adverse implications for disarmament prospects and for international security.

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When the United Nations was founded, the majority of the world's population was still under colonial rule. Now only a tiny minority remains in this status. The United Nations, throughout its history, has done much to facilitate the decolonization process and to assist the newly inde-

pendent countries to assume control of their affairs and to begin the demanding tasks of social and economic development. Through the Trusteeship Council the United Nations has, additionally, presided over the self-determination of 10 Trust Territories. I hope that it will be possible for the eleventh and last to emerge soon from trusteeship.

The task of decolonization is thus well advanced, but still not complete. Some of the remaining colonial territories are, or could become, the cause of serious international conflict. In cases where bilateral negotiation does not succeed, the United Nations will continue to afford the best means of resolving differences, working as appropriate with the relevant regional organization.

The most urgent remaining problem of decolonization is certainly that of Namibia, for which the United Nations bears direct responsibility. All the conditions for implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia laid down by the Security Council have been met. The United Nations has long been prepared to carry out its extensive role in the transitional arrangements. Yet, Namibia is still unjustly denied the right of self-determination because of illegal perpetuation of control by South Africa, which continues to insist on the extraneous linkage to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. A concerted effort needs to be made to gain the co-operation of South Africa in the immediate implementation of the United Nations plan. The problems of southern Africa are deep and varied. The United Nations will need to assist in their alleviation for many years to come. The particular problem of Namibia, however, is ripe for solution now. Delay can only increase instability and violence in the region and unnecessarily prolong the suffering of Namibia's inhabitants.

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The first task of the United Nations in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms as called for in the Charter was to define these rights and freedoms in authoritative form. This process has been extraordinarily comprehensive and successful. The focus of United Nations activities in this field has gradually moved from definition to the promotion of respect for the rights as defined. It must be expected that this movement will continue and expand during the remaining years of the century. With the coming into effect of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on Civil and Political Rights (the latter with its Optional Protocol), the capacity of the United Nations to pursue this sensitive but important task has increased substantially. I believe that a human rights mechanism that will be able gradually to bring wider respect in practice for the rights which Member States have, *de jure*, long accepted is now functioning within the United Nations.

I am pleased to note in this connection a slowly growing tendency towards co-operation by Governments within the framework of the emerging supervisory system. Two recent positive steps warrant mention: the adoption in 1984 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment providing, as it does, for an additional monitoring mechanism; and the taking root of the institution of special rapporteurs appointed by the Commission on Human Rights to look into specific country situations and alleged violations such as disappearances, summary executions, torture and religious intolerance. For example, a Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance has been charged to examine in all parts of the world incidents inconsistent with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. This is the direction of the future.

For the present, however, we still face the reality of widespread and egregious infringement of human rights, a reality that casts shame on our era. No form of management is more widely encompassing or abhorrent than that of *apartheid*.

Apartheid is, in reality, far more than a problem of human rights abuse. It is a problem with tenacious racial, political and economic roots—one that jeopardizes the stability and security of an entire region. Only the total elimination of *apartheid* will restore peace to South Africa and to southern Africa as a whole. The General Assembly and the Security Council have on many occasions advocated practical measures to accelerate the process of dismantling *apartheid*. While some progress has been made, it is far too slow and restricted. The United Nations as an organization, and its Member States individually, need to exert every possible influence to persuade the South African authorities that time is running out for a negotiated settlement which could serve the best interests of all the inhabitants of South Africa and, indeed, of that region as a whole. In the mean time, not surprisingly, the demand for additional measures, including sanctions, has gained momentum. A process of consultations has begun in this connection in the United Nations. It is essential for the international community to intensify the pressure for peaceful change. Additionally, there is need to strengthen, through concerted action, the States of the region that are victims of South African acts of harassment and destabilization. They must be helped to overcome their vulnerability and reduce their economic dependence on South Africa.

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The emergence of a new distribution of forces to which I referred at the beginning of this report has brought with it the need and opportunity for profound social adjustment as well as the social tensions associated with societies in flux. The United Nations throughout its history has been deeply involved in encouraging recognition of emerging needs—to protect the environment, to respect the equality of women, to recognize and respond to the needs of children, to develop a global perspective on population growth. In the coming years the United Nations will be challenged to sustain the leadership it has provided in these areas and to further the very substantial progress that has been made. There will need to be continuing investment in the skills, institutions and processes that can enable us to cope with complexity and rapid change. Within the Secretariat some structural adjustment may need to be undertaken to tighten management and co-ordination of programmes in the social area.

The refugee flow has been a particularly disturbing result of the political, economic and social changes of recent years. At present, over 10 million refugees remain under the care or protection of the United Nations. This is a mammoth service to desperately needy people and to international stability as well. As political systems mature and regional conflicts are resolved, I would hope that the number of refugees will decline. Even if the refugee problem abates somewhat, however, the United Nations may well be called upon to deal with new problems connected with mass migration for economic and related reasons to which I alluded earlier. Intensified, well-directed development strategies now, of course, could lessen the likelihood of this eventuality or reduce its potential dimensions.

While neither terrorism nor illegal traffic in narcotics is new, both problems have assumed proportions that reflect extreme societal tensions. Both result from a profound confusion of moral values and are encouraged by disorientation in a world made insecure by conflict and deprivation

of rights, by poverty and despair. They threaten not only the health and safety of individuals but also the stability of governmental structures and the very fabric of societies. Not all the causes of these two grave phenomena can be dealt with by multilateral means. Yet they are both problems that transcend frontiers and have direct relevance to international security. They are accordingly being addressed with increased attention within the United Nations.

During the past year both the Security Council and the General Assembly took the very important step of condemning terrorism in all its forms, thus authoritatively denying to it any justification under any circumstances. These resolutions express authoritatively a universal consensus against the victimization of innocent people, involved in no way as partisans in a political struggle, through cruel, unjustifiable and counter-productive acts. Continuing and intensified international co-operation will be needed, however, to combat this evil. I would again, in this connection, urge all Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the conventions adopted in the United Nations on particular aspects of terrorism, such as the taking of innocent hostages, and to continue to build on, and widen, the basis for action.

The United Nations has also taken important steps to combat drug abuse and illicit traffic in drugs. There has been a heartening response to my proposal that the United Nations convene, in June 1987, the first global conference to deal with all aspects of these subjects. Preparatory work is under way to ensure that agreement is reached on practical and concerted action to be taken by the international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations, communities and even individuals. Some steps have already been taken. In July, the United Nations convened the first Interregional Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies dealing with drug-related problems. The draft of a new convention, aimed at improving international co-operation and filling existing gaps in international law to combat illicit trafficking in drugs, has been completed by the competent unit of the United Nations and is now in the hands of Governments. The United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control is rapidly expanding its assistance to Member States and international agencies in their efforts to combat cultivation, traffic in, and abuse of illegal drugs. This scourge has become so deadly and widespread that further forms of co-operative international efforts may well be needed. While I fully recognize the sensitivities involved, I wonder, for example, if Member States have yet adequately considered the possibilities of a strengthened global enforcement capability, which might reduce the need for Governments to rely on other types of control.

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In the preceding sections of this report I have described the contribution I believe the United Nations can make to solving the problems we shall face as we move into the next millennium. If the United Nations is to make that contribution, it will have to have a solid foundation of commitment and support from Member States. The intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat which services it must be structured and administered in a way to maintain the confidence of Member States. The Organization must be financially sound and provided, in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Charter, with the resources needed to implement the mandated programmes.

These conditions are not met at the present time. This year the United Nations has confronted the most severe

financial crisis in its history, the immediate cause of which is the failure of a number of Member States to meet their financial obligations under the Charter. It is not yet clear whether the United Nations will remain solvent throughout the remainder of the year. If it does, this will in no way mean that the financial crisis will have been overcome. On the contrary, it must be anticipated that 1987 will begin with a larger accumulated deficit than 1986 and with reserves still depleted.

It is, I believe, necessary to look squarely at the underlying causes of the financial problem. They are first and foremost political and for this very reason have implications for the Organization far beyond the state of its finances. Differences of views concerning programmes of work of the United Nations have prejudiced not only the budgetary process but also the readiness of some Member States to place reliance in the United Nations as a major instrumentality for positive regional and global change. The resolution of serious political conflicts long on the United Nations agenda, to which reference has been made earlier, would serve greatly to reduce the differences with regard to the budget. In the absence of such basic political change, Member States need to make greater efforts, in a manner consonant with the Charter, to accommodate differences through compromise and restraint in reaching broad agreement on budget programmes and priorities. Any change in procedures related to the budget that might facilitate such broad agreement encompassing, also, the amount of resources required, would be a major step towards assuring the capacity of the United Nations to deal effectively over the coming years with the broad range of problems that can only be resolved through multilateral means.

While the underlying causes of the budgetary problem of the United Nations are political, the structural and administrative efficiency of the United Nations is also unquestionably an important factor. There have been frequent allegations that the Organization is too large, unnecessarily complex and excessively expensive. The General Assembly at its fortieth session established the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to conduct a thorough review of the administrative and financial matters of the United Nations with a view to identifying measures for further improving the efficiency of its administrative and financial functioning, which would contribute to strengthening its effectiveness in dealing with political, economic and social issues. The analyses and recommendations of this Group will certainly receive the careful attention of the Assembly and will, I hope, lead to a stronger Organization enjoying wider confidence among Member States. For my part, I believe that at the present time, when the future of the United Nations so evidently depends on greater support, commitment and utilization by all Member States, certain points need to be made:

A functioning world organization exists. It consists of intergovernmental machinery and an international secretariat to service it. The intergovernmental machinery has grown and become ever more complex in response to new global problems. The Secretariat has also grown, primarily as a result of the demands of the more extended intergovernmental machinery it must service. This growth has been rapid and, to an extent, excessive both in numbers and rank. Some orderly reduction at all levels is needed. Beyond that, however, unless there is some parallel consolidation and rationalization of the intergovernmental machinery and a clearer sense of priorities in mandated programmes, reduction of Secretariat staff cannot but have an adverse effect on the services expected by intergovernmental bodies and the Membership as a whole.

The Secretariat embraces a remarkably integrated international staff that has repeatedly shown the capacity to meet the most demanding situations and to provide, on a sustained basis, highly competent service to the Organization. During the past year staff members have demonstrated loyalty and fortitude in accepting economy measures directly affecting their well-being. To maintain the effectiveness of the United Nations over the coming years, I consider it crucial to maintain employment conditions that will allow the United Nations to attract and retain employees of the highest competence, efficiency and integrity. To seek to solve the Organization's financial difficulties at the expense of staff entitlements would be extremely short-sighted and counter-productive, and would have widespread adverse implications for the common system. The mandate of the International Civil Service Commission to advise the Assembly on the conditions of service throughout the system should be respected.

Respect for the status of international civil servants is essential to a Secretariat that will enjoy the confidence of Member States. There should be no distinction among staff members based on nationality. As provided in the Charter, staff members, in turn, must refrain from any action that might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.

There is need for improved management of the Secretariat at all levels. A principal task for the Secretary-General in the coming years will be to assure that management skills are given high priority in recruitment and in training.

Good management will require greater mobility of staff, and an effective system of career development. This must be accompanied by improved prospects for women in the Secretariat. The General Assembly has set the goal that, by the year 1990, 30 per cent of professional posts subject to geographical distribution should be occupied by women. At present we have reached just under 25 per cent. Progress towards the 30 per cent goal has been made more complicated by the financial necessity to freeze recruitment and defer promotion but its attainment must be seen as a matter of high importance for the future.

It will be of much importance to maintain a constructive relationship between staff, through their elected representatives, and management, and a climate of mutual confidence. This is of special value in a period of difficult financial retrenchment.

The re-examination of structure, staff and procedures, which is taking place, should be carried forward with these points in mind. If this is done, there is a good prospect of a tighter, less costly Secretariat in the years ahead. Member States, for their part, will need to act to rationalize the intergovernmental machinery and the application of priorities; they will also need to accept the implications of any staff reduction. The present year has demonstrated anew and in very stark terms, however, that the overriding element in the financial, as well as political, viability of the United Nations is compliance by Member States with the provisions of the Charter. For a good many years, the financial situation of the United Nations has been difficult because of the failure of a number of Member States to meet the financial commitments that are an inherent and binding part of United Nations membership. The debilitating effect of this long-lasting emergency was not seen as critical because, until this year, to the extent that it applied to the regular programme budget, the deficit could be covered by reserves. This year the very operation of the United Nations has been placed in jeopardy because, with reserves depleted, it has been confronted with the likeli-

hood of the withholding by the principal contributing State of a substantial portion of its assessed contribution to the regular budget. From the experience of the present year it is all too evident that without a strong and reliable financial foundation, anchored in respect for the Charter, the United Nations can be crippled in meeting the needs and opportunities of the coming years. This would surely be contrary to the interests of the entire membership and of the peoples of the world.

* * *

I should like to conclude this report with some personal observations on the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the post which I have been privileged to occupy during the last five years, and on the Organization itself.

It is the Secretary-General's duty to offer guidance and assistance in all the areas discussed in this report. He must try to present concepts and approaches that will evoke a convergence of views among Member States on political issues and be active, through the various forms of good offices, in seeking to prevent conflicts and to resolve disputes. In the vast field of global economic and social problems, the Secretary-General should project a vision of the future and indicate the priorities by which that vision might be made a reality. He must seek to bring about the implementation of the relevant decisions of the various intergovernmental bodies. As Chief Administrative Officer, he must guide and control the Secretariat so as to provide the best possible service to the Organization and its Member States.


In these manifold activities, the Secretary-General needs not only to be guided, himself, by the principles of the Charter; he must also uphold them publicly as spokesman for the concept of a just and peaceful world which the United Nations embodies—a world in which States will act within an accepted legal order with respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law. He needs either to speak out publicly or to work through quiet diplomacy, as most useful in his judgement, on those issues which can prejudice the goals established by the founders of the United Nations. In all situations, the Secretary-General has to proceed with and through the Member States, which alone can provide him with the political support and authority he needs to operate effectively.

In my years in this Office, I have had the deep satisfaction of receiving strong and consistent support from the membership. Many tasks accorded to me imply a high degree of confidence in the role of the Secretary-General. I believe that some positive results have been obtained although not, certainly, to the extent I would have liked. I feel compelled, however, to express some concern over a tendency to view the Secretary-General in some circumstances as somehow separate and apart from the rest of the Organization. To express full confidence in the Secretary-General while failing to give the necessary support to the Security Council or to work constructively in the General Assembly to bring conflicting positions into greater consonance is fundamentally contradictory. Such a dichotomy cannot be conducive to the realization of the full potential of the Secretary-General's position or, far worse, that of the Organization as a whole. I am convinced that the continuing and enhanced effectiveness of the United Nations depends above all on the readiness of Member States to see the whole of the United Nations as the necessary structure for dealing with the transcendent problems of an interdependent world.

For my part, I have found in the countries and cities, in the academic institutions and the public organizations that I have visited as Secretary-General, truly remarkable support for the United Nations and faith in its purposes. There is an evident longing that it succeed in its mission of peace. I have found at the same time that the extent of the activities in which the United Nations is engaged is insufficiently appreciated and that there is sometimes a distorted image of the manner in which the Organization operates. Persistent, tendentious criticism of the United Nations by relatively small groups has affected confidence in the effectiveness, if not the goals, of the Organization. There is today a need for a more vigorous and determined defence by those who believe, as I firmly do, that the complex problems of an increasingly interdependent world can only be solved with the help of effective multilateral action—that the safety net which the United Nations constitutes for the world's security should not be allowed to become tattered. If the hopes and aspirations which the peoples of the United Nations enshrined in the Charter are to be fulfilled, multilateralism, as embodied in the United Nations, needs its champions; they must speak more boldly and knowledgeably. Such champions are to be found not only amongst the Governments of Member States. They exist in all walks of life, including academic institutions and the world media. I wish, in this connection, to refer specifically to the many non-governmental

organizations which share the goals and, in many instances, the work of the United Nations. I am convinced that, in the coming years, the United Nations will need to place even greater emphasis on close communication and co-operation with these organizations. They constitute an essential extension of the capacity of the United Nations to reach its global constituency.

In ending this closing report of my term, I would like finally to state that the United Nations system, while imperfect as any human undertaking must be, offers almost unlimited potential for the creation of a strong and durable foundation for peace and for the well-being of the world's population. I believe it to be of the utmost importance for *all* nations that this instrumentality be constructively supported and wisely utilized, and that the provisions of its Charter be universally respected, in the interest of a safe and harmonious passage to the next millennium.



JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR
Secretary-General

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