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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 7 October 1988, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. AKE
(Vice-President) (Côte d'Ivoire)

later:

Mr. ESSY
(Vice-President) (Côte d'Ivoire)

- Address by General Joao Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Kalpokas (Vanuatu)
Mr. Kravets (Ukrainian SSR)
Mr. Johnson (Liberia)
Mr. Chnoupek (Czechoslovakia)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Ake (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADDRESS BY GENERAL JOAO BERNARDO VIEIRA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

General Joao Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations General Assembly the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency General Joao Bernardo Vieira, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President VIEIRA (spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation): There is a universal consensus today as to the significance of the far-reaching changes that are taking place in the world, changes that carry with them great hopes for a better future. This explains what is most special about this session of the General Assembly which, more than drawing up a diagnosis of the present international situation, should gear its work to optimizing and rendering irreversible the positive developments that now characterize the state of international relations. The progress made in the field of disarmament, in the process of the normalizing of relations between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and towards the peaceful settlement of the various conflicts in different parts of the world do seem to indicate that mankind is turning a new corner in an optimistic spirit.

(President Vieira)

The Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, expresses this situation in his report very ably and clearly, interpreting the feelings of the international community with the insight and political vision he has always shown in the exercise of his lofty duties. This is an opportunity for us to encourage him and to assure him of our steadfast support and appreciation.

The changes under way are not the result of chance. It would be illusory to believe that the process we are witnessing is simply the result of isolated phenomena or intrinsic mechanisms.

The rejection of the deterministic view by the community of nations is evident in the constant efforts of our universal Organization not only to preserve the world from destruction and the various ills that beset it politically, economically and socially, but also to build the foundations of the future. Our common future depends on the individual and collective attitudes we assume today, the maturity and good sense we bring to our actions, the conscience and interaction of our activities and the complementarity of our interests.

The progress made over the last two years on the way to détente and in the settlement of regional conflicts in particular are encouraging indications that awareness of this is beginning to emerge. The time is ripe, then, for action to give a new direction to international relations. Will we be able to rise to this historic occasion?

It is urgent that substantial steps be taken especially in the field of disarmament in line with the historic Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - between the United States and the Soviet Union. We feel, moreover, that the negotiations under way

(President Vieira)

should soon produce tangible results leading to the elimination and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and the reduction of conventional weapons to the lowest possible level.

Never since the end of the Second World War has mankind accumulated so much goodwill and success along the way to peace, mutual understanding and the creation of conditions favourable to peace and to more human international relations.

In the present trends and the prospects they are opening up we see the expression of a humanism justified and stimulated by growing world interdependence and mutual contacts between peoples, cultures and development processes. But there can be no real prosperity so long as it remains the privilege of a few, so long as it is confined to certain areas of the planet and factors of progress and backwardness, stability and confrontation, continue to exist side by side.

The debt crisis, the fall in exports, the stagnation and decline in the growth rate of developing countries, the continuous deterioration in the terms of trade and the decline in real terms of Official Development Assistance are some of the principal features of the present international economic order that stand in sharp contradiction to the growing interdependence of nations.

Against that background, the economic situation of Africa is especially affected by the repercussions of the world economic crisis which are aggravated by the devastating effects of prolonged drought and other natural disasters. The correction of imbalances and the reversing of trends in the present international economic situation requires the introduction of vigorous structural reforms throughout the system, especially as regards its monetary and financial aspects, if we wish to prevent the development of some States taking place at the expense of others.

(President Vieira)

The struggle to introduce a new international economic order is thus as relevant and urgent as ever. In recent years there have been many initiatives to eliminate imbalances and their harmful effects on the developing countries, which indicates the dawning awareness of the need to identify the causes of these ills and to unite in our efforts to eradicate them.

The adoption at the twelfth special session of the General Assembly of the Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990, in the mid-term review of which we are now engaged, the platform adopted for settlement of the urgent problem of debt, and the results of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development illustrate the growing concern of the international community with regard to development problems.

We must, however, recognize that practical and comprehensive initiatives to give substance to our will to build a new world economic system based on justice and equity are still lacking.

(President Vieira)

The failure to meet the target for official development assistance set in the United Nations International Development Strategy is a clear illustration of this fact and indicates the need to consider carefully the objectives and priorities with respect to international co-operation.

At the beginning of my statement I referred to the universal consensus that is emerging with regard to the changes now occurring in international relations. The broad prospects opened up through the peaceful settlement of disputes and the elimination of tensions in regions such as southern Africa, South-East Asia and Central America give us hope that these indications are not just temporary ones. In Afghanistan, in Kampuchea, in Central America, Chad, Western Sahara, Cyprus and the Gulf, we are seeing signs of hope that prove that peace is possible when there is a real will to make use of dialogue and co-operation in settling problems between States. We hope that the political realism shown by the different parties involved in these matters will become ever stronger and permit the definitive removal of the obstacles that continue to prevent a return to peace, stability and understanding in these regions.

Nevertheless, we cannot fail to be concerned over the lack of progress in the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the questions of the Middle East, the Korean peninsula and East Timor in particular.

Of all the conflicts that have shaken the world over the last four decades, the conflict that persists in the Middle East is certainly one of the most complex and dangerous for world stability.

To be just and lasting, any settlement of the Middle East situation must take into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to their own State, as well as the right of all States of the region to have their national independence and territorial integrity respected and to live securely within internationally recognized boundaries.

(President Vieira)

In the case of East Timor we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his good offices with a view to the full affirmation of the inalienable rights of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.

In southern Africa the negotiations under way have contributed to a change in the political climate and have brought progress in efforts to create conditions conducive to a global solution of the conflict in the region. We welcome this development, but we must continue to express our concern over the persistence of apartheid in South Africa.

The visit I have just made to the People's Republic of Angola and the People's Republic of Mozambique enabled me to observe the commitment, the constructive spirit and openmindedness that characterize the position of those Governments in seeking a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the problems of southern Africa.

In this context, and although we remain alert to the positive direction the talks on South-West Africa are taking and the prospects of peace which they open up, the international community must be firm in pursuing its endeavours with a view to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and to the elimination of the system of apartheid as a necessary step towards guaranteeing peace, stability and democracy in that part of the African continent.

The election of Mr. Dante Caputo to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session, which is taking place at such an important juncture, is due recognition of his great abilities and competence in carrying out these delicate tasks.

We are unanimous in recognizing the importance of this stage in human history. A new spirit of dialogue, tolerance and agreement prevails in the world today and should be sustained. This cannot but contribute to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in resolving conflicts, solving the problems of development, and preserving international peace and security.

(President Vieira)

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is a timely and well-deserved tribute to the courage and dedication of all of these men of good will.

This session should echo the new sensitivity and the new approach that prevail in facing the problems of our era, showing a spirit of willingness to engage in dialogue and our ability to recognize the true challenges that we face today in analysing and discussing the questions on our agenda. We feel sure that, together, we can take advantage of this historic occasion and usher in the new dawn that is now breaking, with confidence in our ability to join forces as we build a new reality ever closer to mankind's deepest aspirations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Guinea-Bissau for the important statement he has just made.

General Joao Bernardo Vieira, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KALFOKAS (Vanuatu): I have the honour to convey to Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina our congratulations on his election to the high office of President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. He has our best wishes for success and the assurance of our full co-operation, as he presides over what promises to be one of the most historic and far-reaching sessions of the General Assembly. He also has our appreciation for the very efficient manner in which he has thus far presided over our deliberations and otherwise piloted the business of the Assembly. In this respect, he has given us a great deal to be pleased with.

It is appropriate, we believe, to pay a tribute also to Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, Permanent Representative of Barbados, who was also a candidate for the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. This outstanding daughter of the Caribbean has given her country, her region, and her friends much to be proud of. It is rare for one region to present two such eminently qualified persons for the same office at the same time. In so doing this region has once again, as it did five years earlier, enhanced and encouraged the development of democratic processes within the United Nations itself. For this we commend them both and we thank the Assembly.

Mr. Caputo is known as a man who cherishes democracy. His Government is one which is committed to democratic principles and ideals and which has worked hard to nurture and consolidate the restoration of his country's democracy. Thus, under his presidency, there can never be too many reminders of the importance of fostering and encouraging democracy, particularly in international relations and within international organizations.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

To us in Vanuatu, a small island developing State, the enhancement of international democratic processes is far more than a nice-sounding slogan, an interesting theory, or a remote abstraction. We view this as an essential element of our development as an independent State. Our very survival as a nation depends on universal respect for the most basic and fundamental principles of international law, particularly respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every country regardless of its size, its location, or the health of its economy.

Unfortunately, in international relations there have always been a few who occasionally forget to live by these important principles. Like small countries in every region of the world we have in recent years become very distressed by the rapidly accelerating tendency of some larger States to forsake calm and rational dialogue as a solution to international problems. They seem to favour instead an escalating arms race, threats, and the actual use of military force.*

In some instances, economic coercion and intimidation have been substituted for military force, but the results have been the same - international chaos. The chaos that has resulted may, on the surface, have appeared to be less violent than that which occurred during the two world wars earlier this century. However, to those who have been the victims of the chaos, the consequences have been as severe and as tragic as those of the two world wars. After all, how large is the world of a frightened refugee fleeing his or her home in a desperate attempt to save his or her life in southern Africa, in South-East Asia, in Central America, or in the Middle East?

* Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

Therefore, smaller countries, such as our own, often view with a sense of urgency the need for the international community to strengthen democratic processes and truly recognize the inherent equality of all human beings and, by extension, the sovereign equality of all nations - large and small, rich and poor. What we cannot comprehend are those who proclaim that all people are equal, or that all nations are equal, but who then act as if might - be it military or economic - makes some "more equal" than others.

Thus, today, as hopes are being revived for genuine political dialogue to be a vehicle for resolving so many of the world's problems and as so many dreams of democratic freedoms are being born in so many places, we view this assemblage of nations as more relevant and potentially more dynamic than at any other time in its brief history.

Like so many others, we are encouraged by the possibility that hostilities and tensions may be diminishing in so many parts of the world and that peace may finally become a reality for so many beleaguered and besieged peoples. Military conflict between the world's two great super-Powers now appears less likely; for this the entire world can breathe a collective sigh of relief. The war between Iran and Iraq may finally be coming to an end. The Soviet Union is demonstrating how great a Power it is by withdrawing its forces from Afghanistan, as it promised it would.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

There are also faint glimmers of hope that the long and costly conflicts in Kampuchea, Western Sahara, Chad, Namibia and Central America may possibly be resolved and the people of those countries left to choose their own future, free from outside interference. Furthermore, tentative steps have been taken to lay aside old antagonisms and differences in Cyprus, the Korean peninsula, the Balkans, the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa. Every day former rivals are discovering that there is more that unites them than that divides them.

However, we must be realistic and understand that the road to peace is still paved with a great many obstacles. In every one of the areas where there is new hope, we must understand that there is little that is certain. The process of finding workable solutions and then implementing those solutions remains fragile and extremely delicate in every one of the previously mentioned situations.

Despite what some might like us to believe, dialogue itself is never the sole answer for resolving any conflict. For dialogue to succeed there must also be a willingness to work together and to change the past antagonistic relationships and actions which led to existing contradictions and hostilities. In certain instances, circumstances dictate that there will be no rational dialogue until there has been a political struggle.

In this respect we are reminded once again of the words of Frederick Douglass, a leader of the anti-slavery movement during the nineteenth century and a great orator. As he most aptly put it,

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."
Had he been alive today he might very well have been examining life in South Africa under the heel of the apartheid régime, or the motivation of the Palestinian resistance, when he said:

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are men who want ... rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters."

We might do well to recall those words during our deliberations, particularly our deliberations on those items of our agenda which relate to pleas for justice from those who have for far too long been denied justice.

We believe that rational dialogue is the preferred way of conducting international relations and resolving disputes between nations. However, we also understand that dialogue is only possible when there is an appreciation of its basis, and when there is common ground on which to meet.

There is not likely to be a meaningful dialogue in South Africa until the illegitimate apartheid régime recognizes the humanity of the African majority, frees from prison all those it should be negotiating with and allows others to return from exile. There is not likely to be a successful dialogue on the question of Palestine until all the interested parties are brought together at an international conference. In our own region, the question of East Timor will not be resolved until the people of that Territory are part of the process of dialogue and are allowed to choose freely for themselves who they are and what they wish to be.

Dialogue is not diatribe. The word carries within its meaning a willingness to listen and at least to understand the perspective of the partner in the dialogue. Perhaps the most difficult notion for some to grasp is the notion that sincere dialogue does not necessarily entail claims that one party, but not the other, has seen the error of its ways and is now committed to change and to adopting the values and beliefs of its former adversary.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

The largest and seemingly most intractable political problems between modern States can probably best be resolved by a convergence of views and a convergence of values. Mutual respect is the key, not domination or empty claims of triumph. As we all know, in this nuclear age, this age of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, there are few instances in which any particular State can claim outright victory and impose its will on another.

New Caledonia is a case in point with respect to the effects of reasonableness and dialogue. During the last two General Assembly sessions, few items were as heatedly debated as the colonial status of our South Pacific neighbour. Our own relations with France, and those of our other Pacific neighbours, could not help but be affected by what we viewed as insensitivity to the legitimate aspirations of the colonized indigenous Kanak population of New Caledonia. We are pleased that today things are calmer in New Caledonia. This is due in part to the wisdom, the sensitivity and the courage of the current Government of France. It is also due to the courage and vision of New Caledonia's people and to their desire not to see their land torn further apart by civil intercommunal strife. There are still many difficult issues to be resolved in New Caledonia, but France deserves credit for changing the emotion-charged atmosphere in the Territory and taking measures to bring New Caledonia's people together in peace for a dialogue on the future.

No one can predict with certainty what lies ahead. We recall what happened more than 14 years ago when another European country, which was then a colonial Power in Africa, underwent a change of Government. It then put forward various proposals and options which prompted the leadership of what was then a liberation movement and is now an African Government to issue a reminder that "there is no such thing as democratic colonialism". Those words ring as true today as they did in 1974.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

The South Pacific Forum, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations have all contributed to the current hopeful state of affairs in New Caledonia, through their consistent support for well-established principles of self-determination and decolonization. However, the candid approach of the French Government and the patience and statesmanship of New Caledonia's people have been like a breath of fresh air.

We believe that no possibility for further dialogue and peaceful evolution with regard to New Caledonia should be left unexplored. Therefore, we were encouraged by the consensus reached by the Special Committee on decolonization when it considered the question of New Caledonia in August. We hope that the General Assembly will encourage the parties to continue to work together by reaching the same consensus on the recommendations of the Committee of 24.

My Government understands and supports the principled position of the African States on the issue of dumping nuclear and industrial waste in Africa. It was not too long ago that we raised the same issue with respect to our own region. We hope that that problem will be considered in its true global perspective rather than merely on a regional basis, which could lead to other regions' becoming dumping grounds for dangerous waste materials from the industrialized countries. We also hope that the views of the countries of the South Pacific on nuclear testing in our environment will similarly be understood and supported. What is at stake in Africa is also at stake in the South Pacific.

The name of the country doing the testing or shipping the waste to be dumped is irrelevant to us. The stated purpose of the testing is also irrelevant, as is the money paid for the dumping. What matters to us is the harm being done to our waters, to our lands, to our atmosphere, to our sources of food and sustenance and to our unborn children. Please try to understand our concerns.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

It is ironic that many of the world's industrial countries became developed countries at the expense of what is now called the developing world. We, the now less-developed countries, were once forced to export cheap raw materials - and in some cases even our people, against their will - to help fuel the development of other countries. In return we were forced to accept certain manufactured goods, and again, in some cases even people, in a reverse migration that was, again, against our will, against our own political and economic interests and ultimately against our own sovereignty.

Now, we are still exporting raw materials. Today, they are called commodities, and we have little more to say about their prices than we did yesterday. Developing countries still export people as well. Some, of course, are refugees who have been made homeless and socially marginal. Others are not refugees but instead tend to be the most capable and best trained, with skills that are in great demand in developed countries and that are in short supply in developing countries. However, owing to adverse economic conditions, those skilled individuals usually cannot be as highly compensated or recognized in our developing countries. Often, therefore, developing countries wind up with smaller long-term returns on expenditures for higher education and advanced training. Paradoxically, we sometimes find ourselves in a sense subsidizing developed countries, which, on a proportional basis, might actually spend less on education but which are able to offer far greater financial rewards to those trained by other societies.

Developing countries also export something else, namely, capital, in the form of debt-servicing. That phenomenon has now appreciably widened the gap between have and have-not nations and created extremely dangerous social conditions in many debtor nations. It is almost incomprehensible that there is not a greater appreciation of the potential danger among the foremost decision-makers in the

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

creditor States and financial institutions. It is also ironic that, while some were encouraged to borrow excessively, others found it almost impossible to borrow at all.

The manner in which some countries were encouraged to burden themselves with excessive debt is somewhat similar to the manner in which individuals were encouraged to acquire other well-known addictions. The habit is proving to be just as difficult to break, and the social consequences just as severe.

We offer those observations without bitterness, rancour or recrimination. We do not know of any easy solutions. However, we believe that we cannot adequately face the future without an understanding of the past. We cannot work together in finding answers until we know what questions we want answered.

The recent natural disasters that have brought death, destruction and new hardships to the peoples of Jamaica, Mexico, Bangladesh and India have shocked the world. Humanitarian assistance has been mobilized to help speed recovery. However, we ask once again: why does the world always wait for disaster to strike before going to the aid of those who are most vulnerable?

The specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) do an excellent job with the resources they have at their command. Many private social and philanthropic organizations are also deeply committed and involved in the development process. However, adverse environmental and climatic conditions, as well as the follies of mankind, are strong and persistent adversaries. They will not easily cease their assaults on the efforts to bring a better life to every corner of the globe.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

Thus, my Government joins with those who appeal for greater international co-operation in United Nations development activities and disaster-relief efforts. We join with those who appeal for an end to the arms race and arms trafficking. We join with those who work relentlessly to end drug trafficking and the social devastation it brings in its wake.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

We applaud initiatives to study and address the serious threat posed to life on this planet by the destruction of the Earth's protective ozone layer. It appears that in the years to come no issue will be more vital to mankind's survival. The gravity of this issue is reflected in the fact that even as we meet here today more chlorine and other chemicals are being released into our atmosphere. These will cause even more depletion of the ozone shield well into the next century.

Mankind has been blessed, we believe, with a high form of intelligence and a wide range of emotions. Occasionally we utilize this blessing as if it were a curse on our fellow human beings.

We have created horrible weapons of mass destruction, ranging from large stockpiles of conventional arms to chemical and bacteriological agents and nuclear devices. Unfortunately, those who have such weapons are seldom satisfied with their mere creation and possession.

The use of these instruments of death has always been among the saddest chapters of the human experience. Today more than ever before the international community should speak with one loud and clear voice against the manufacture, stockpiling and use of all these instruments of unholy terror. Our failure to do so can only result in greater human tragedy and irreparably rupture the thread that binds us all together.

During last year's general debate we expressed our sadness that intercommunal strife was plaguing every corner of the globe. Unfortunately, the plague seems to have worsened during the past year. Once again, it is not necessary to recite names, dates or places; we are all painfully familiar with them. Nor do we wish to single out any particular country or region. The problem is universal.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

Once again we note that much of this intercommunal or ethnic strife has its roots in colonial history, during which colonialist practices often appeared to favour one ethnic group over another. However, some of today's intercommunal or ethnic conflicts either pre-date or are not at all related to colonialism. These are, rather, the result of ancient antagonisms and rivalries that all Governments should find unacceptable in the contemporary world.

While we are concerned at the growth and proliferation of these conflicts, we firmly adhere to the well-founded principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States and respect for the territorial integrity of every internationally recognized State.

We are aware that from time to time internal and external opponents of particular Governments have incited or helped fan the flames of intercommunal or ethnic strife. However, that does not mean that we should close our eyes or our ears and pretend that the problem does not exist. This is a major problem which is likely to become worse unless the nations of the world exercise strong moral leadership.

Many people in the world look to the United Nations for such leadership. Generally speaking, we do not fail to exercise this leadership in a responsible fashion. The general subject of intercommunal or ethnic relations is one on which we believe that the international community should exercise its moral leadership by its example. We despair when we note that no region of the world and no country anywhere is completely immune from this problem. Even the largest and wealthiest countries in the developed world have had to face this difficult issue, and still face it today. Those that face the issue with the greatest candour will make the greatest advances in stemming ethnic fears and bettering human relations.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

For developing countries, our failure to recognize that the problem exists can only have disastrous consequences. We wish to see no society torn asunder, no country dismembered, no people displaced or disenfranchised and no Government embarrassed. We wish, rather, to encourage peoples everywhere to respect the cultures, customs and history of others. We wish to encourage greater understanding of what has divided people in the past and what can unite them in the future. We wish to see a broad international consensus appealing for an end to intercommunal strife, better inter-ethnic relations, and social progress and economic development for all peoples in every corner of the world.

Perhaps this vision of ours is a dream. However, it is a dream we are proud to possess and be possessed by. We pray that others share this dream and will be willing to join in making it a reality. What could possibly be more consistent with the ideals that have brought us together? What could possibly be more consistent with our own pronouncements on the evils of apartheid and other forms of institutionalized racism? What better way to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

I conclude by conveying our appreciation of the efforts of the President of the last session, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, and those of our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. Their dedication, their patience and their successes on our behalf have in many ways helped to make the future far brighter than it was one year ago.

The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations for its peace-keeping operations is very appropriate recognition of the fact that, through his tireless efforts and with the able assistance of a Secretariat of which we should all be proud, the Secretary-General has at last succeeded in narrowly opening the door to the very long corridor to peace, justice and harmony.

(Mr. Kalpokas, Vanuatu)

Now we, the nations of the world, must do our best to play our part by opening the door further and taking the next important step. It rests with us to cross the threshold of that door and begin the long walk down that corridor together, hand in hand.

Let us draw strength from our unity. Let us draw courage from the realization of our common fate should we fail or should we falter. Let us be nations that are, in purpose and objectives, truly united.

Mr. KRAVETS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): I should like, through you, Sir, to extend to Mr. Dante Caputo our congratulations on his election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session and our sincere wishes for all possible success in carrying out his responsible and difficult duties.

I wish to pay a tribute to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Peter Florin, for his able guidance of the work of the General Assembly during the past year.

The general debate has been going on for nearly two weeks. The diverse and varied conclusions and assessments expressed by delegations in their statements describing present-day international relations share one common feature: the present state of these relations is characterized as encouraging for the achievement of new, real and positive results. Joint efforts have fulfilled the first prerequisites for limiting the arms race, reducing the threat of nuclear war and settling protracted regional conflicts.

The will and readiness of the USSR and the United States to begin actual nuclear disarmament are of paramount importance.

Progress in nuclear disarmament has undoubtedly given an impetus to the working out of specific measures for the limitation and elimination of other means of warfare. It is impossible to deny the relationship between disarmament and the

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

strengthening of international security. New political thinking is increasingly becoming the dominant reality of today's world and steadily making headway through the barriers of enmity and suspicion.

In his address to the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 1 October 1988, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, said:

"Our policy in international affairs is clear. It is aimed at eliminating the threat of nuclear catastrophe, normalizing international relations, establishing equal and mutually beneficial relations among countries and peoples of the world, achieving broad-based co-operation in various areas and ensuring each people the right to a free choice of its future ... We shall continue to follow this policy unswervingly."

While emphasizing the significance of peaceful coexistence as the highest universal principle ensuring mankind's progress in security, we believe that the internationalization of the efforts of States faced with global challenges and the joining of their forces for the protection of common human values constitute another pillar of universal security. To act from positions of reason and realism and to strive persistently to find generally acceptable solutions, no matter how difficult that may seem - that is the imperative of our time. Pluralism of interests, the principle of freedom of choice, the priority of shared human values and the primacy of international law cannot be ignored in international affairs.

In this sense, the importance of the United Nations can hardly be overestimated. Throughout the existence of the Organization, the Ukrainian SSR has consistently supported the most effective implementation of its function of maintaining peace and security, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Our delegation believes that the enhanced role and authority of the United Nations will make it possible to move successfully towards a comprehensive system of international security, thus providing for a gradual process of demilitarization, democratization and humanization of international relations and the achievement of the security of States on the basis of political interaction and unconditional compliance with international obligations in all spheres - military, political, economic, ecological and humanitarian. A comprehensive system of international security should be worked out on the basis of the Charter and in strict compliance with its principles.

The extensive discussion of these problems in the United Nations testifies to their urgency and importance. The concept proposed by the socialist countries is not a dogma. We are open to all constructive proposals on the subject from any State.

The Ukrainian delegation believes that the forty-third session of the General Assembly can make a substantive contribution to a businesslike discussion of the concept of comprehensive security. We hope that this session will step-up the search for common approaches by States to specific aspects of world security. The objective is to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations and its principal bodies, to enhance the role of the Secretary-General, inter alia in the settlement of conflicts between States through negotiations, good offices and mediation, and to make better use of military observers and United Nations peace-keeping forces. United Nations actions in this area should be developed and expanded. It was with great satisfaction that we learned of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. We believe that these forces will continue to be worthy of this trust and this honour.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

We are firmly convinced that the United Nations should play a decisive role in mankind's progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world. It is important to ensure in practice that the United Nations and its bodies are effective in implementing their function of maintaining peace and security. It is our view that the political conditions now exist for the full realization of the peace-making potential of the United Nations in accordance with its Charter.

The main road to comprehensive security lies through disarmament. We note as a very positive sign the emerging understanding of the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to disarmament issues, combining a strengthening of confidence and the establishment of an effective verification mechanism with the preparation of realistic programmes for the reduction and elimination of specific types of armaments, based on a balance of interests rather than a balance of forces.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Nuclear disarmament is the most important part of the disarmament process. An early agreement on a 50 per cent cut in the strategic offensive arms of the Soviet Union and the United States is among the urgently necessary measures leading to this goal. Unquestionably, this problem is not a simple one. It is probably the most complicated problem in the post-war world politics. However, given the necessary political will on both sides, a treaty could be concluded in the near future.

The world community should concentrate on making nuclear disarmament a continuous, ever-growing and deepening process. Only through joint efforts by all States will it be possible to eliminate nuclear weapons completely and guarantee that they will never reappear. We believe that to this end the potential of the United Nations, especially of the Security Council, should be used to the maximum extent, and that better use should be made of all existing negotiating mechanisms, including that most important body, the Conference on Disarmament.

In practical terms, it is necessary to concentrate on implementing United Nations decisions on key problems associated with curbing the arms race - particularly those measures adopted by consensus. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR shares many of the ideas contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization in 1988 and considers particularly pertinent his comment that

"... the great Powers need to show a sensitivity to the expressed wishes of the majority of Member States." (A/43/1, p. 8)

The noble goal of ridding mankind of weapons of mass destruction will remain an empty dream if weapons are not effectively barred from outer space. Therefore, no attempts to establish a need for the strategic defence initiative can be accepted, from either the moral point of view or that of strengthening security.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Much has been said, at this rostrum and elsewhere, about its non-defensive and destabilizing nature and its serious dangers for all mankind.

The Ukrainian SSR believes that compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM), signed in 1972, and the commitment not to withdraw from it for a specified period guarantee world stability, the successful solution of the problems of strategic offensive weapons and greater international security. It is important that this be reflected in the agreement currently being negotiated in Geneva between the Soviet Union and the United States, in strict conformity with the Washington understanding of 10 December 1987.

We also favour supplementing the bilateral negotiations between the USSR and the United States with effective multilateral efforts, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, to prevent an arms race in outer space. Today the interests of common security dictate that we work actively on agreements to ban all anti-satellite weapons, ensure the immunity of artificial earth satellites, and institute an international system to verify that no arms of any kind are placed in outer space.

At the same time, international mechanisms should be established within the framework of the United Nations which could specifically address the issue of multilateral co-operation in outer space. A number of initiatives have been advanced in this regard; the task now is to implement them. The proposal to set up a centre for international co-operation on the peaceful uses of outer space on the basis of the Krasnoyarsk radar station deserves special attention.

A ban on nuclear testing is a key aspect of nuclear disarmament. It is necessary to take one more decisive step to achieve an agreement on a comprehensive and total test ban. If the ongoing negotiations between the USSR and the United States are supplemented by appropriate multilateral efforts in the framework of the

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Conference on Disarmament, this could bring us very close to completion of an agreement in the interest of all countries. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that a combination of bilateral and multilateral efforts in this manner will lead to an early, successful solution to this important question.

The atom must be used only for peaceful purposes. The socialist countries, rejecting nuclear intimidation, have proposed the concept of using nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind. That concept, in its most concentrated form, is expounded in the programme for the establishment of an international régime for the safe development of nuclear power put forward by the Soviet Union. Implementation of this programme would promote closer international co-operation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and make the work more systematic and purposeful. In this context, the Ukrainian delegation believes that it is important to strengthen further the existing relevant international instruments, while strictly enforcing non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The international community has come close to resolving the vital question of the conclusion of a universal convention on the complete and comprehensive prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. This is one of the priority objectives in the field of disarmament. The elimination of chemical weapons would be a real contribution to ensuring genuine and equal security for States. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR hopes that the General Assembly, at its forty-third session, will direct the efforts of the negotiators towards the early conclusion of the drafting of the convention, and will promote opposition to chemical weapons and their use.

In our view, the process of disarmament becomes pointless if, at the same time as certain types of arms are eliminated, steps are taken to build up military power or introduce so-called compensation measures. This runs counter to basic logic.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

That is why, while giving understandable priority to the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, we favour significant cuts in conventional arms and armed forces.

On the basis of principle, the position of the socialist countries on the issue was formulated as far back as 1986, in Budapest. It was supplemented and made more specific at a recent meeting in Warsaw of the Political Consultative Committee of the member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The documents of that meeting stress that the interests of European and common security make it imperative to move towards significant cuts in armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. Negotiations on this could get under way this year. Their primary objective must be radically to reduce the military potential of both alliances, and to create in the continent a situation in which the countries of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization would retain the forces and means necessary for defence, but insufficient for launching a surprise attack or conducting offensive operations.

The more real the disarmament process becomes, the greater the importance that must be given to verification mechanisms, as a vital means of ensuring security. At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament a number of socialist countries put forward specific proposals for the establishment of broad international verification procedures, under the auspices of the United Nations, to monitor compliance with agreements, reduce international tensions, limit arms and review the military situation in areas of conflict. In our view, we should proceed immediately to develop the main parameters of the future verification mechanism.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Confidence and openness are major factors in establishing security in the military sphere. It is necessary to promote a transition from individual confidence-building measures and openness to broad-scale policy in this area. The Ukrainian SSR supports the appeal of the General Assembly to ensure the widest possible dissemination of objective information on military questions. It is time to begin to work out, in the framework of the United Nations, objective criteria and parameters to ensure openness and thus facilitate the process of real disarmament.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

We actively support disarmament and we believe that demilitarization will have tangible results for mankind as a whole. Among other things it will help to release vast material and intellectual resources for the purposes of social and economic development.

Finding solutions to regional conflicts is a matter of the highest priority and immediate concern for our Organization. We are pleased to note that in recent months there has been a positive movement in some of these areas.

A genuine breakthrough has been achieved in resolving the Afghan problem. A precedent has been set that goes far beyond the framework of that question. The prestige of the United Nations has been considerably enhanced and its effectiveness and great potential for settling regional conflicts have been demonstrated.

The provisions of the Geneva Agreements elaborated under the auspices of the United Nations must be strictly observed by all parties. As is well known, the Soviet Union fully complies with those Agreements. We expect others to do likewise. The United Nations, and in particular the present session of the General Assembly, is called upon to play an important role in securing a comprehensive and all-round solution to the Afghan problem.

The eight-year-long tragic and destructive war between Iran and Iraq has been halted. Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, its Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council, it has been possible to begin to implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987). It is our hope that the people of Baghdad and Tehran will never again have to look up to the sky with fear or to hear the sound of artillery fire. We hope that tankers will no longer be going up in flames and that fishermen and innocent passengers will no longer be victims of the concentration of naval forces in the waters of the Persian Gulf. The Ukrainian

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Soviet Socialist Republic welcomes the readiness of the five permanent members of the Security Council to contribute to settling the conflict, with the mediation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Serious progress has been made in resolving the situation around Kampuchea. It is based on realistic, specific proposals made by the Governments of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Indonesia and other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, proposals that are aimed at a political settlement of the conflict in the spirit of national reconciliation. In this context, recognition of the Kampuchean people's right to a free social and political choice is of fundamental significance. It is incumbent on all States to promote a favourable political climate for the continuation and fruitful completion of the negotiating process on this issue.

There have been certain changes in the situation in southern Africa. The Ukrainian SSR looks for the successful and early completion of the quadripartite negotiations with a view to settling the situation in the region. The international community should exert pressure on the South African racist régime and ensure the implementation of appropriate United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The Ukrainian SSR firmly supports the speedy eradication of the shameful system of apartheid.

The transition from confrontation to the political settlement of conflicts with the active participation of the United Nations could and must become an important feature of the late 1980s.

We believe that during this session of the General Assembly the adoption by consensus of a declaration on the prevention and elimination of disputes and

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

situations that might threaten international peace and security, and on the role of the United Nations in this area, could become a landmark for progress in this direction.

At the same time we must note that some regional conflicts have not yet reached the stage of practical settlement and continue seriously to threaten international peace and security. We are particularly concerned about the situation in the Middle East. The conflict in that region can be resolved only through political means. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East could become an effective instrument for a Middle East settlement and, within its framework, a solution to the key Palestinian problem. The Conference should be attended by all parties concerned, including the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO, and the permanent members of the Security Council. We call on the world community to speak out unambiguously, in the course of the present session of the General Assembly, in favour of the prompt convening of that Conference.

The situation in Central America remains a complex one. Interference in the affairs of the States of the region obstructs positive trends towards a peaceful settlement on the basis of the efforts of the Contadora Group. The validity of this conclusion is widely recognized throughout the world, including the United States. The main responsibility for tensions in the region rests with the United States Administration. It should indeed give serious thought to this fact, rather than lecturing others on how and which God to worship. The Nicaraguan people must be given the opportunity to exercise their right to a free choice of their path of development.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

As in the past, we support the peace-loving initiatives of the Korean People's Democratic Republic. The realization of the Republic's proposals with regard to turning the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and with regard to seeking large-scale, stage-by-stage reductions in armed forces and withdrawing United States troops from South Korea would make a tangible contribution to strengthening peace on the Korean peninsula. We strongly oppose intentions of perpetuating the division of Korea.

Today there is no need to prove that the elimination of existing crisis situations and the prevention of new ones is the highest priority task of the world community.

Another imperative of our time is the prevention of irreversible changes in the environment and the preservation of the planet's natural resources for succeeding generations. This has become an urgent matter both for the international community as a whole and for each of its individual members. The Earth, together with Nature and its resources, is a common heritage. That is why it is essential immediately to change ways of thinking and conduct at national and international levels in order to protect the environment.

These objectives could be served by the concept of international ecological security set forth by the socialist countries, which has a clear and practical orientation: to utilize the mechanism of the United Nations and begin the elaboration of the norms of ecological behaviour of States and basic guidelines for co-operation in the area. We hope that the United Nations will play a decisive role in mobilizing the efforts of the international community to resolve the task of preserving the environment.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

The expanding political dialogue on numerous vital problems of concern to mankind creates a rather encouraging background for the development of international economic relations. The state of the world economy continues to be extremely unstable. Of particular concern is the worsening economic situation of the developing countries, which suffer both from their unequal status in the world economic system and from the ever growing volume of foreign debt.

The existence of difficulties in international economic relations, which are being further exacerbated, is indicative of the need to democratize the entire system of world economic ties, to establish a new international economic order and to ensure the international economic security of States.

In the context of the growing internationalization of world economic ties and the interdependence of national economies, there is a need for joint action by all countries and peoples to develop stable and predictable international economic exchanges, as well as broad co-operation on an equitable and just basis, in order to ensure for all countries a way of life worthy of man.

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is in favour of intensifying universal dialogue on international economic policies in the United Nations.

The Ukrainian SSR is prepared to co-operate actively with all those who are striving to contribute to the democratization of international relations and to the strengthening of comprehensive security. The profound processes of perestroika, now under way in the Ukraine, as in the entire Soviet Union, envisage intensification of our foreign policy activities on the basis of realism and take into account the diversity of interests and priorities of values common to all mankind. According to First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Vladimir V. Shcherbitsky,

"perestroika ... is exerting an ever-growing influence on developments in the modern world and, primarily, is creating a favourable situation for the strengthening of international security".

We hope that efforts to create a world founded on reasonable and civilized relations between States and peoples will be supported by all delegations. We believe that the forty-third session of the General Assembly will give a fresh impetus to mankind's progress towards a safer future and will help transform the United Nations into an effective instrument of peace.

Mr. JOHNSON (Liberia): On behalf of the President, the Government and the people of Liberia, I warmly congratulate the President on his election to preside over this forty-third session of the General Assembly. His wide experience and well-known diplomatic skills fully assure us that this session, under his leadership, will achieve very positive results. He can count on the usual co-operation and support of the delegation of Liberia in the months ahead.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

Permit me also to extend well-deserved thanks and appreciation to the President's predecessor, Ambassador Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, who conducted the affairs of the forty-second session with great aplomb and distinction.

Special commendation is likewise due our illustrious Secretary-General for the skill and courage with which he has been serving the international community. My Government will continue to do everything to assist him in upholding the credibility of the United Nations and ensuring that its mandates are fulfilled.

Finally, allow me to take special note of the opportunities which the annual sessions of the General Assembly offer us for fruitful bilateral and multilateral consultations on issues of mutual interest.

The tragic experiences of two world wars and the imminent danger of nuclear catastrophe have made the search for peace and development the paramount concern of our time. The principles and ideals by which peace is to be achieved and development attained have been fully set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Assembly.

For 43 years, guided by those principles and ideals, we have come here with various problems, disputes and ideas. Here we have debated the issues, grappled with the problems and their possible solutions, and expressed both our frustrations and our aspirations.

In spite of our varying dispositions and our cultural, economic and ideological differences, we have always acknowledged and professed the continuing relevance of the United Nations in the search for peace, security and development. It is against this background that my delegation, in addressing the specific issues before the Assembly, will give renewed emphasis to the need for strengthening the rôle of dialogue and solidarity for the betterment of the human condition.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

My delegation welcomes the stirrings of peace that have greeted this forty-third session and given the international community new hope for the efficacy of multilateralism in the resolution of conflict.

In this connection, we note with satisfaction the Peace Accords with regard to Afghanistan, signed last April, which are facilitating the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country. We also applaud the acceptance by Iran of the provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which has brought about the cessation of hostilities in the Persian Gulf and made possible the on-going peace talks between Iraq and Iran under the auspices of the United Nations. We are also pleased that, through the mediation of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front have consented to the holding of a referendum, which constitutes an important step towards resolving the question of Western Sahara. Moreover, we note that negotiations between the two communities in Cyprus are progressing satisfactorily, also under the auspices of the United Nations.

It is in this context that we must highly commend the Nobel Prize Committee for being so thoughtful as to award its 1988 Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. And we congratulate the Secretary-General on this achievement. At the same time, my delegation appeals to all the parties involved to continue to work co-operatively for the final resolution of these problems.

But we must resist every temptation to be lulled into a state of complacency by these recent successes, as our present agenda still contains a number of unresolved issues which must claim the Assembly's urgent attention.

Despite the best efforts of the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a just and lasting settlement to the Kampuchea dispute has remained elusive. We therefore support the Jakarta Informal Meeting,

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

which seeks to bring together all the parties concerned in an effort to resolve the problem of Kampuchea. A comprehensive settlement of the dispute must take into account the exercise by the Kampuchean people of their inalienable right to self-determination, free from foreign interference.

With regard to the Korean question, my delegation urges acceleration of efforts to bring about a constructive and fruitful dialogue in the peninsula. The special declaration by President Roh Tae Woo of July 1988, in the interest of national self-esteem and prosperity, constitutes a positive step towards easing tension and leading to the peaceful unification of the two Koreas.

We congratulate the Governments and peoples of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the commemoration of their fortieth anniversary of nationhood. We wish them a prosperous and bright future and the attainment of unity, peace and stability as soon as possible.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

In Central America, various peace plans proposed by the countries of the region have not yielded the desired results. My delegation would therefore hope that the people of Central America could be left alone to chart their own course on the path of restoring peace, fostering democracy and strengthening regional unity and economic co-operation.

A sad episode in the Middle East crisis is the tragedy of Lebanon, a country with which Liberia has enjoyed close ties of friendship over the years. Once a prosperous nation, Lebanon is today ravaged by years of incessant civil strife, aggravated by unwarranted external interference. We therefore urge respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, the safeguarding of its independence, an end to violence, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from its territory.

Since the last session of the General Assembly a year ago the crisis in the Middle East has escalated significantly despite the various peace initiatives undertaken. In this connection, we call on Israel to exercise restraint in its enforcement of law and order in the occupied territories. It continues to be the view of my Government that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict must take into account the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, as well as the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

In this regard we reiterate the call for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation on a basis of equality of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the authentic representative of the Palestinian people. Such a conference should certainly enhance the peace process in the region.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

A few days ago, General Moussa Traoré, President of Mali and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, eloquently outlined to the Assembly Africa's position on a number of important issues, including the vexed question of southern Africa.

My delegation therefore wishes only to stress Liberia's grave concern that the racist minority régime in Pretoria, aided and abetted by its collaborators, has continued to defy with impunity the collective will of the international community by its flagrant disregard of the fundamental rights of the black majority in their own land. Furthermore, there can be no denying the fact that the extremity of the cruel and degrading treatment meted out to black South Africans bears a disturbing and chilling resemblance to Nazi practices. To date, the brutal and remorseless Pretoria régime has kept hundreds, if not thousands, of children in detention, subjecting them to systematic torture and even genocide. Reports of such horrors perpetrated by the régime leave my Government in no doubt that the international community has not done enough to destroy apartheid.

So entrenched is the racist minority régime's policy of apartheid that no other peaceful means short of comprehensive mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter can eradicate that system and save the country from an eventual bloodbath. Those who argue that sanctions will only bring hardships to the blacks of South Africa and to the front-line States are either simply against the aspirations of black people or interested only in their investments and profits. For the persistent rejection of apartheid by the black South Africans themselves has surely demonstrated that they at least would prefer hardship in freedom to prosperity under apartheid.

My delegation holds the view that, if the racist régime in South Africa truly desires genuine peace, it must, in good faith and without pre-conditions,

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

immediately release Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners as a first step towards reconciliation and the institution of a non-racial democratic society based on universal franchise. In this context, Liberia wishes to associate itself with those delegations that have called for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in 1989 to consider the overall situation in southern Africa, including the question of Namibia.

A clear demonstration of South Africa's arrogance is its illegal occupation of Namibia, in utter contempt of the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, and its continued use of that Territory to launch subversive, aggressive and destabilizing policies against neighbouring States.

While we take note of the recent quadripartite discussions on the Namibian question, there is nothing in the negotiating records of the racist régime to justify any reliance on its commitments. The Security Council should therefore proceed to take such measures as may be necessary to carry out its mandate, as set forth in its resolution 435 (1978). As we observe the tenth anniversary of that resolution, we reaffirm Namibia's right to self-determination and independence within a united territory, including Walvis Bay, the Penguin Islands and all other offshore islands, and under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Namibian people. It is our fervent hope that, when the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly convenes, a free and independent Namibia will be able to take its rightful place as a full Member of the United Nations.

I wish to turn now to the question of disarmament, which for my delegation at least has real implications not only for peace and security but for development as well. Liberia maintains its position that if peace and development are to be fully achieved the international community simply cannot continue to spend so many

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

billions of dollars each year on armaments and related activities. In seeking to ensure security we have somehow unleashed a costly arms race, which has diverted resources from development needs, thereby exacerbating social problems in developing countries. This point was well articulated by a number of speakers at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held last year.

The recent ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - by the United States and the Soviet Union marks a new and encouraging beginning in bilateral disarmament efforts. On the other hand, the failure of the third special session devoted to disarmament to arrive at a consensus represents a serious setback to multilateral disarmament initiatives. My Government continues to believe that bilateral and multilateral efforts complement each other and that the United Nations remains the central forum for disarmament issues.

Liberia considers the Non-Proliferation Treaty an important international instrument and its ratification a vital first step towards nuclear disarmament. In this connection, we are particularly concerned that South Africa's nuclear capability has continued to frustrate the attainment of the objective of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, to make it a zone of peace.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

Indeed, the credibility of the Treaty will remain doubtful as long as measures are not taken to ensure the subjection of the nuclear capability of South Africa and other countries to safeguards and inspection under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Thus we favour the convening of the Fourth Review Conference of States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1990 to consider such matters, among others.

My delegation joins previous speakers who have condemned the use of chemical weapons in contravention of the 1925 Geneva Treaty banning the use of such weapons. Similarly, we are gravely concerned about the dumping of toxic and other hazardous waste on African soil, an act which is tantamount to a declaration of chemical war on our people. This multifarious environmental abuse endangers the well-being and lives of all our peoples. Such waste not only poisons the air we breathe but also pollutes our water resources and contaminates the very soil upon which we depend for the cultivation of food. But is there not an ethical question also? At the close of the twentieth century, should Africa still be facing such a threat to its survival? Was slavery not enough? Was colonial exploitation not enough? Is the present critical economic situation made worse by various natural disasters not enough? Must we now be exposed also to poisonous and radioactive substances that threaten our very survival as a people?

So serious is this problem of toxic waste disposal that we must urge the Economic and Social Council to expedite the adoption and implementation of its draft convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes. We also welcome the call for the Conference on Disarmament to draft a convention on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes for hostile purposes.

Unlike the political environment in which significant progress towards the relaxation of tension has been observed, it is regrettable that no comparable development in the economic sphere was attained during the year.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

Since the last session of this Assembly, the international economic environment experienced further decline and disequilibrium. The fall in commodity prices, the decrease in the flow of official development assistance and the crushing debt burden have continued to be the most serious factors responsible for the net outflow of capital from developing to developed countries.

It was this very serious predicament that led to the convening of the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, on the critical economic situation in Africa, a little over two years ago. In this connection, the mid-term review and appraisal exercise undertaken last month has confirmed that the international community has not fulfilled its commitment under the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

In the meantime, African countries themselves, in spite of the unfavourable international economic climate, have endeavoured to pursue structural adjustment programmes, institutionalized or otherwise.

Liberia, for instance, has undertaken certain measures within its own capabilities, to establish conditions for economic recovery. I refer to attempts being made, through a green revolution programme, to expand agricultural production with a view to attaining food self-sufficiency. Moreover, steps have been taken, not only towards efficient management of the public sector, but also towards the encouragement and promotion of private initiative and enterprise in economic growth and development.

In view of the foregoing, my delegation joins previous speakers who have called on the international community to live up to its commitment under the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, and in particular to accelerate the flow of resources to the continent.

(Mr. Johnson, Liberia)

Our common heritage and interdependence demand the concerted effort of all for the attainment of the conditions that will ensure a higher standard of living for the peoples of the developing countries.

This planet on which we live may have its imperfections, but until scientific exploration can confirm otherwise, it remains the only home we have. It is therefore our sacred obligation to create in it a wholesome environment for ourselves and for posterity.

In this connection, we must strive for a political environment free from conflicts and war; we must strive for an economic environment that provides for a just, equitable and efficient production and distribution of goods and services, and we must pursue sustainable development policies that will ensure the protection of our eco-system.

When we pollute the oceans, the rivers and streams, when we denude our forests, when we violate the human rights of our fellow man, and engage in various forms of warfare with our neighbours, when we exploit the poor and the weak, we do great harm to the human environment and thereby undermine the peace and security of our world.

The task of facing the future and safeguarding the interest of succeeding generations requires our collective moral commitment and co-ordinated political will and action.

In the view of my Government, the United Nations is still the best instrument at our disposal for the attainment of that wholesome environment envisaged and desired by all, and we thus reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the principles and purposes enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. CHNOUPEK (Czechoslovakia): I should like to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the high office of President of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish him great success. I am convinced that under his experienced leadership the work of the present session will lead to a growth of confidence in our Organization. I assure him of the readiness of Czechoslovakia to continue to develop its friendly ties with his country which, through its active policy, is playing such an important role in today's world.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

I should also like to express our deep gratitude for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, to diminish tensions throughout the world and to resolve regional conflicts through negotiation. We especially appreciate the fact that thanks to his initiatives and efforts our Organization has achieved new and significant successes and is thus living up to the noble role it has been given, for, as the Latin adage states: Pacis donum est omnibus bonum - the gift of peace is a blessing for all.

In international relations we are witnessing events of truly unique significance. They demonstrate new political thinking. Militancy is being rejected; there is greater openness; we observe a growing readiness to engage in negotiations in a civilized and businesslike manner. These very promising events are leading to the building of relations among States on the basis of a balance of interests, a strengthening of the role of international law, and a humanizing of international relations - thus leading to a more comprehensive solution to problems of the survival of civilization as a universal human challenge.

However, this cannot be done through destructive confrontation. The way to a solution lies in active co-operation. This is the philosophy of the end of the present and the beginning of the next century. It must open the way to the emergence of qualitatively new relations both on the global and regional scale. Of course, this requires that new phenomena must be analysed from new points of view. Problems that seemed unresolvable must now be resolved. The unthinkable must become the thinkable. What was impossible yesterday must be made possible.

The viability of this approach has been demonstrated by the four Soviet-United States summit meetings which have made the world safer, prospects for peace stronger and the future more hopeful. A landmark of fundamental importance was the ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

Shorter-Range Missiles, the first step of an era of real disarmament. We were one of the eight States involved in the process of its realization. We have done everything that was required of us. We agreed with the conducting of verification measures on our territory. Soviet operational-tactical missiles with increased radius, which had been stationed in my country since the end of 1983, were removed even before the Treaty's entry into force.

Today we must all jointly ask ourselves a question: how do we proceed further? How can we develop now what sober-minded politicians have agreed upon? The answer is unequivocal: let us compete in humanism. Let us make the cornerstone that unites us the survival and continuation of mankind. Let us hold a competition which, despite all of our differences in policy, ideology, world view, and other spheres, assures both nations and individuals of their future existence. Let us demilitarize international relations and prevent both social and ecological disasters, thus arriving at new horizons of mutually beneficial co-operation.

It is precisely in this spirit that our Organization today must have a decisive say in the fundamental strengthening of multilateralism, which has proved to be better able to create confidence and achieve results than any other options. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his annual report, when global problems require global solutions the value of the United Nations for its Members is obvious to all. If its influence is not strengthened, we shall be constantly confronted with evergrowing instability throughout the world.

This is also the basis of the concept for comprehensive security which encompasses all aspects of international relations. It meets the need to make universal human interests a major element of international policy. It serves as an

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impulse for broad constructive dialogue on what can be done to enhance substantially the role of the United Nations in the present world.

Positive developments in the world are creating favourable conditions for implementing the goals of restructuring all spheres of life in our country. By following that path we are endeavouring to build on the significant results achieved in our social and economic development and to strengthen the progressive and democratic traditions of our people.

This year we are commemorating some important anniversaries, both glorious and tragic: the seventieth anniversary of an independent Czechoslovakia, but also the fiftieth anniversary of the "Munich Agreement", which was concluded behind our backs. This remains an abiding lesson. Security was, and continues to be, shared and indivisible. We recall the historical experience of two world wars and four decades of socialist development. This obliges us to pursue an active and constructive policy of peaceful co-operation.

We see as a manifestation of this policy the proposal for the creation of a zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations along the line of contact between the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty and the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization put forward by the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Milos Jakes. We believe that it is precisely the States adjacent to that line which bear a special responsibility. In fact, this is where the concentration of military power is greatest, and therefore misunderstandings are fraught with the most dangerous consequences and confrontation is most hazardous.

Hence, we are proposing a plan for the peaceful strengthening of security guarantees in this zone, without confrontation, through both military and non-military measures. We intend to act in this area on the basis of the

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all-European process, and in so doing to create in that zone stimulus for its further intensification. To do this, of course, we must jointly throw off the burden of the past. We must abandon outdated models of bloc-derived thinking, reject the concept of enemies, measure the boldness of human deeds not by their degree of militancy but by their ability to overcome one-sided and deceptive military ambitions.

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Our proposal subordinates military relations to the principle of reasonable sufficiency. We want to enhance confidence-building measures and fulfil and further develop the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe with respect to military exercises, including notification of such exercises, limiting the number of participating troops, inviting observers and the right of inspection. We favour a joint comparison of military doctrines with a view to giving them a purely defensive character. Together with our allies, in the context of an all-European reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons on the basis of joint elimination of imbalances and asymmetries in the various types of weaponry, we propose the removal of the most dangerous offensive weapons from the zone along the line of contact between the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). We listened with special interest to the valuable proposals along those same lines made by President François Mitterand. These strengthen our conviction that intense dialogue will continue.

At the same time we must seek the development of the non-military factors of security. Therefore our proposal also encompasses the political, economic, ecological and humanitarian spheres. In the zone of confidence, measures in those spheres could even go beyond the parameters agreed upon in the all-European framework.

The possible opportunities for peaceful co-operation are practically inexhaustible. We are thinking of joint ventures, the creation of free-trade zones, an improvement of the transport and energy infrastructure, a simplification of customs and visa practices, environmental protection, relief assistance in cases of natural disaster, a broadening of relations between twin cities and provinces, the establishment of direct contacts between schools, scientific institutions,

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cultural establishments and youth organizations, reciprocal medical assistance in border areas, and so forth.

In that way we aim at the establishment of a machinery for regular political dialogue among the States of both parts of Europe, a dialogue built on a broad, solid basis. This follows upon other proposals made by socialist countries and on the constructive approaches and views of our Western partners. We are open to any constructive comments and considerations.

We are in favour of the speediest possible radical mutual reductions in armed forces and conventional weapons on our continent. Without this the danger of military confrontation will continue. The July session of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, held at Warsaw, put forward new and far-reaching proposals: to eliminate asymmetry in weapons and armed forces and subsequently to reduce them by approximately 25 per cent, or by 500,000 servicemen on either side, then to continue this process until the military potential of both sides takes on an exclusively defensive character. This would take place in three carefully balanced stages. In that way our countries have taken a constructive step in an effort to meet the position of the NATO countries, proposing a realistic scheme for reductions.

We are working towards a speedy and successful conclusion of the Vienna meeting, which should adopt a substantive and well-balanced document and agree on the mandate for negotiations on conventional disarmament. We agree with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, that this should take place as soon as during this month. It is true that a great deal of responsible work has already been done at that meeting. Foundations have been laid for the adoption of good documents making

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possible broad development of all-European co-operation. A constructive approach now requires political determination to complete the agreements now being prepared and political will with respect to all questions under discussion.

We propose that one of the subsequent events be the holding of an economic forum. It could discuss the entire question of co-operation in that sphere. We are ready to act as host to that forum.

In short, we wish jointly to raise the all-European process to a qualitatively higher level commensurate with the realities of our times in order to reaffirm the viability of the concept of a common European home based on the various social choices made by the peoples. We must base it on solid ground, build it boldly and ensure that Europe speaks to the world in a single language of peace.

We face no greater challenge today than that of making the disarmament process irreversible. That was our basic approach to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Unfortunately, that session ended without a final document. Yet it was a useful experience and a lesson for the future. The proposals made at the session remain a rich source of inspiration. For our part, we set out our proposals in a joint memorandum from the Warsaw Treaty States on security through disarmament, and in a number of other documents. I would mention, first of all, the joint proposal of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to establish international machinery for verification of compliance with agreements aimed at reducing tension and limiting weapons, and to monitor the military situation in regions of conflict. This machinery would function under United Nations auspices. We are pleased that this has attracted numerous interesting proposals from other countries. Let us do all in our power to prevent our ever having to say that the settlement of a given issue is no longer verifiable.

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Let the humanistic triad of confidence, security and co-operation light the way towards qualitatively new international relations. Freeing the world from the nuclear-arms race remains the pivotal global task. To continue that race amounts to running consciously towards an abyss. A basic step in the right direction would be the early conclusion of work on a Soviet-United States treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons, to be accompanied by strict compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, since the link between these matters is a deep and organic one. We favour the immediate cessation of nuclear-weapon testing. That would give us time for political solutions and for formulating a treaty on the complete, universal prohibition of such testing. We also support the development of international co-operation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes exclusively. We desire the strengthening of the authority of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with consistent application of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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An important addition to the efforts to avert the nuclear threat has been the concrete proposal put forward by the Governments of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic to establish a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe. We support the setting up of similar zone in other parts of the world as well, particularly in the Balkans and in Scandinavia.

It is high time that all obstacles to the completion of the convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons be set aside. We are prepared to be among its first signatories. We neither produce nor possess such weapons. Further delays in the preparation of the convention serve only to promote the spread of such weapons and increase the risk of their use. In that connection we have noted a change in the attitude of France that, we hope, will facilitate agreement. Like other countries, we are concerned about the start of production of binary warfare agents and about their possible deployment in Europe. Together with the German Democratic Republic, we propose the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. As a Contracting Party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, we favour the proposal to convene a conference of the signatory States.

We share the view that it is necessary to enhance the Organization's role in limiting conventional armaments. We believe that the proposal to create within the United Nations a register of trade in weapons will contribute to that end.

We are in favour of an expansion of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which the United Nations has proclaimed to be the common heritage of mankind. It would be unforgivable were we to display indifference to the threat of the misuse of space for military purposes.

We are in favour of an enhanced effectiveness of the disarmament mechanism, primarily of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. In this spirit, it should gradually become a permanent universal body for disarmament negotiations, as we

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proposed last February. That is in keeping with the logic of current global changes and integration processes.

An essential condition for the attainment of over-all security is the peaceful settlement of international disputes and regional conflicts. Here, the fruitful dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States has had a beneficial effect. An improvement in East-West relations provides that calm that is necessary to the process of seeking and finding equitable solutions to long-standing and dangerous hotbeds of tension. We must take full advantage of it. Thus, an active role for the United Nations is now indispensable. What body other than the United Nations can make such a significant contribution to the protection of legitimate rights and co-ordinate the interests of the parties involved? What other body can better implement the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, stimulate the adoption of international guarantees to prevent the recurrence of a conflict? Only the United Nations can do so.

We therefore welcome the growing importance of the role of the "blue berets" in various world trouble-spots. They are a symbol of one of the most important areas of United Nations activities, namely, peace-keeping. They can be even more effective in helping to stabilize the situation in troubled areas, ensure conditions for negotiated settlements and prevent the outbreak of new conflicts.

Together with world public opinion, we have reacted with hope to the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan worked out with the participation of the United Nations Secretary-General and jointly guaranteed by the two greatest Powers. The well-known steps taken by the Soviet Union and Afghanistan represent a responsible and scrupulous honouring of the obligations undertaken. In this connection we would emphasize the fundamental significance of unswerving compliance on the part of all signatories. Only in that way will it be possible to ensure peace for the Afghan people and for the region as a whole.

We have also welcomed the positive turn of events in the Persian Gulf as a result of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We note with satisfaction that with the assistance of the United Nations the senseless bloodshed has been halted. The presence of the United Nations Military Observer Group has been a stabilizing influence. We fully support the continuation of talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Realistic prerequisites have emerged for a peaceful settlement of the problems in southern Africa. We hope that the ongoing trilateral negotiations between Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the participation of the United States, will bring independence to Namibia in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978). That would also defuse the situation in the region as a whole. The efforts of the United Nations and of the entire world community must be even more consistently directed towards achieving a full and immediate end to the shameless practice of the policy of apartheid by the Government of South Africa.

We welcome the evolution of the situation in Central America as a result of the Esquipulas II Agreement. However, we deplore the complication of the situation in the region and of the development of the peace process that is now, as in the past, being caused by foreign support for the counterrevolutionary forces in Nicaragua.

We view the convening of an international conference on the Middle East conflict under the auspices of the United Nations as a way of exerting joint efforts to find a definitive solution. The uprising in the occupied territories has once again demonstrated that the question of Palestine is at the core of any solution. The cause could only gain from the start of work by a preparatory committee for such a conference.

We are in favour of a peaceful settlement of the problem of Cyprus, one that would ensure the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus while preserving its non-aligned status.

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We fully support the constructive efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aimed at easing the international tension in the Korean peninsula and at a peaceful reunification of the country. Thanks to those efforts, the prerequisites for entering into an orderly dialogue have improved.

We are also pleased by the positive developments in the Horn of Africa, in particular with the significant peace agreement signed by Ethiopia and Somalia. We also support the joint efforts of Ethiopia and the Sudan to strengthen relations of peace and mutual co-operation. A contribution to improving the international climate has also been made by developments with regard to a settlement of the situation in Western Sahara.

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We note with satisfaction, and we support, the efforts to find a political solution to the question of Kampuchea and to bring peace and stability to South-East Asia. We favour further development of the results of the informal meeting in Djakarta. The basis for positive developments in this field is being created by the 50 per cent reduction in the number of Vietnamese volunteers in Kampuchea, now under way.

In our view the seven-point programme of the USSR designed to strengthen peace in the Asian-Pacific region will give momentum to the process.

We welcome the positive trend to enhance the role of the Security Council in the resolution of international disputes and conflicts. In this regard it would be desirable periodically to convene meetings of the Council at the level of ministers of foreign affairs and, where the need exists, to do so in regions of tension, as proposed here by Minister Edouard Shevardnadze. Improved co-operation among the permanent members of the Security Council would doubtless yield fruitful results. We appreciate the deepening co-ordination between the Security Council and the Secretary-General. We favour the adoption of the draft declaration on the prevention and removal of threats to peace and situations that might threaten international peace and security. Today the United Nations can truly do more for the cause of peace than ever before.

Czechoslovakia consistently favours the democratic restructuring of international economic relations. We cannot allow encouraging developments in other areas to lag behind. We cannot ignore the growth of forces and processes that have already created uncertainty and mistrust in the world economy and are likely to bring about an unprecedented international economic crisis. The future of us all will rest on quicksand if we fail to bridge the gap between the developed and the developing countries. Therefore it is indispensable to create a new international economic order and justly to resolve the problems of underdevelopment

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and foreign debt and eliminate their appalling consequences: hunger, the inequality of millions, disease, illiteracy and poverty. We wish actively to promote resolution of these crucial problems.

We believe it necessary to continue the international dialogue on the implementation of the principle "disarmament for development" and step by step to translate the conclusions of last year's United Nations conference into concrete measures. As we made clear in the document of the Political Consultative Committee issued at its July session in Warsaw, special attention must also be paid to the dangerous environmental consequences of the arms race.

We can no longer stand by idly in the face of the ecological threat, a time bomb we have jointly and short-sightedly created. The conclusions of the World Commission on Environment and Development and the document entitled "Environment Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond" must be implemented without further delay.

This year in our country we have adopted a new long-term concept of environmental protection till the end of the century. To prevent ecological factors from undermining stability and peaceful relations, we have put forward a proposal on the creation of international ecological security, which should be based on mutually acceptable principles of co-operation and conduct of States in this regard. We support the idea of co-ordinating efforts on these issues and the holding of a series of international meetings on the way to the convening of a United Nations conference on the environment in 1992.

We intend to continue to promote the strengthening of international co-operation in the humanitarian sphere as well as in the field of human rights. The persisting flagrant and massive violation of human rights in many parts of the world is indeed one of the most condemnable phenomena of our time. There is no way to be reconciled with it. We recall this with even greater urgency now, on the eve

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of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We welcome the profound ideas voiced here regarding a new category of human rights for the protection of mankind.

In particular the role of international law must be strengthened so that it governs relations among States. Its effectiveness must be continually increased through codification, progressive development and consequent implementation. We welcome the stimulating idea of the Soviet Union regarding working out a long-term programme of development of international law dealing with issues of security, confidence and co-operation. We agree as to the primary importance of legal guarantees of comprehensive security. We are considering ways to make our contribution towards the strengthening of the role of the International Court of Justice.

Given the urgency of the tasks facing the international community at this session, it is essential to strengthen our joint action and co-ordination. The United Nations has a truly indispensable role to play in this regard. Let us therefore concentrate our efforts on comprehensively stepping up the Organization's beneficial work. Let us strengthen the authority of its main bodies and make broad use of the established mechanism for co-operation and the strengthening of peace. Let us bear in mind the decisive importance of the factor of time - that inexorable arbiter of history. Through constructive efforts let us find new avenues leading to the solutions of the problems of our times. Let us cultivate morality and ethics worthy of the international relations of the future.

The Czechoslovak delegation has received a mandate from its Government to act precisely in this way, and it shall honour that mandate.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.