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

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 1 (A/34/1)

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1979

[*Original: English*]
[*11 September 1979*]

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

I

The past year has been full of uncertainty, tension and conflict. The international scene has never been more complex nor the old concepts of power so diffused. There have been sudden shifts in the political balance and unexpected developments rooted in a variety of forces—economic, political, social and even religious. There is an increasing uneasiness as to the manageability of the affairs, and especially the economic life and social organization, of the planet in the circumstances now prevailing. These uncertainties and unforeseen developments affect in different ways the lives and the future of virtually all nations and peoples and give rise to deep-seated feelings of anxiety and frustration, which in turn create a climate favourable to new and unpredictable events.

If ever there was a time for serious reflection and stocktaking on the state and future of the community of nations, it is now. In our current anxiety we have, to some extent, lost sight of the enormous advances that have been made on so many fronts in the past 30 years. What we now require is the necessary spirit of accommodation to take full advantage of those advances.

In the upheavals of our time we can discern certain general trends—the desire to remedy long-standing injustices or ancient grievances, the compulsion of national aspirations, anxiety over the possibility of a viable future for this or that nation, the fear of the designs and ambitions of others and the suffering, frustration and resentment caused by gross economic and social inequities. A generation of unprecedented change has inevitably left many unresolved problems, old and new, as well as a sense of disillusionment at the failure to realize many of the great aims and objectives proclaimed in the optimistic aftermath of the Second World War.

Most of the symptoms and problems I have mentioned are ones which the United Nations, if effectively utilized as the working structure of the world community of the future, could be of unique assistance in solving. We need, above all, to press on with the development of the elements of such a community on a global basis. This is not a matter of abstract idealism but of practical self-interest. It is also a matter of urgency.

There are a number of obvious reasons why the development of an effective world community will be difficult and slow. At one end of the scale we have the complex relationships of the greatest Powers, which are still to a considerable extent prisoners of their mutual fears and suspicions and of the fearful destructive capacity of their weapons systems.

At the other end of the scale the majority of nations and peoples are afflicted in varying degrees by acute problems of instability, poverty and economic weakness, often exacerbated by political and economic developments elsewhere in the world. While the aspirations of their peoples are high, economic dependence or instability shackles many of them to an economic system which no longer meets the requirements of an interdependent world of free nations. For many of them their first generation of independence has coincided with the challenge of coming to terms with a new world, a world in a state of revolutionary technological change. Thus the general longing for peace and equity is shadowed by a widespread unease and lack of confidence in the future.

Between these two poles, many middle and smaller Powers, within the United Nations and in various groupings outside it, have steadily developed a sense of co-operative responsibility on many global issues. The non-aligned movement is a good example of this positive trend. In the United Nations they have shown by and large a mixture of idealism and pragmatism which constitutes a most constructive middle force in the affairs of the world. This, in my view, is one of our best hopes and assets for the future, particularly at a time when the polarization of the world situation caused by great Power tensions would appear to be becoming a less dominant factor of the international scene as other independent political, economic and social forces emerge.

The great Powers have special responsibilities and obligations in the United Nations system. They also have a special need for the world Organization as an alternative to the kind of confrontation which, in our nuclear age, could well be fatal to us all. The United Nations, and especially the Security Council, has played a vital, if sometimes unappreciated, role for many years in providing alternatives to such a confrontation. In recent years the major Powers have on a number of occasions availed themselves of this moderating mechanism during periods of crisis. The United Nations has also played an invaluable role in insulating regional crises to the necessary extent from the delicate balance of nuclear Power relationships. This is certainly not the comprehensive system for the maintenance of international peace and security envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations, but in the extraordinary and, it is to be hoped, transitional conditions of our world, it represents an indispensable safeguard of world peace and survival.

Elsewhere, the United Nations, through the process of decolonization, through its pioneering activities in development, in its current search for a new international economic order and in an increasingly broad attempt to tackle global problems, has been, and is, the centre of an effort to find new arrangements fitting and adequate for our interdependent world. The objective

of such arrangements should be above all to try to make the fundamental changes necessary to lessen the gap between rich and poor and open the door of opportunity to all. The problems and obstacles are uniquely complex and difficult, and progress is slow, but the focus and the objectives are there. Later in this report I shall revert in more detail to this central and essential part of our task.

It cannot be said that the past year has witnessed any striking progress on our main problems. Indeed, the lack of progress, especially on the economic side, is distinctly disappointing and in strong contrast to the evident urgency of most of the problems. Political determination and a sense of pragmatism are necessary to reverse this debilitating situation.

II

Adjustment to change is inevitably a difficult and long process, and we should not overlook what has already been achieved during the life of the United Nations. Indeed many of the developments which we now take for granted or complain about as inadequate would have seemed quite out of reach only a few years ago. What we are trying to create in the United Nations is a world order fundamentally different from any that existed before. This is no small task, and we must remind ourselves from time to time of how much has already been achieved, as well as of the formidable obstacles that remain.

In the relationships of the most powerful nations, for example, much has been done to temper the adverse climate which coloured so strongly the post-war years. In spite of ideological, political and other differences, accommodations have been reached which certainly contribute to making the world a safer and more productive place. We need only think, for example, of the positive development in the relations of China and the United States. This year, we should remember the conclusion, after most complex negotiations between the United States and the USSR, of the SALT II agreement, which offers hope of limiting the growth of strategic nuclear weapons, an indispensable prerequisite to progress on the general problem of disarmament.

The process of accommodation is vital to progress on the various acute regional problems which preoccupy the United Nations. International instruments are essential and useful only if their possibilities are utilized for achieving the accommodations—sometimes quite small in themselves—which could make enormous contributions to world stability.

I have been increasingly aware of the need to encourage by all means the kind of adjustments which could remove, or at least alleviate, the various regional tensions which are still, in my view, the most dangerous threats to world peace. It is mainly for this reason that I have travelled extensively in order to get a first-hand view of such problems and to discuss them directly with the Governments concerned. Very often, of course, little can be achieved in the existing political circumstances but, if a channel of communications or good offices can be of help, I feel strongly that the Secretary-General should be available. In any case there is no substitute for getting to know the problems on the spot and at first hand.

It was with this end in view that I undertook, earlier this year, an extensive tour of East Asian countries. During this trip I had especially the Indo-Chinese and Korean situations in mind, and I very much hope that our talks in the various capitals may provide a basis on which the Governments and parties concerned may feel more ready to reconsider their positions and to use the possibilities the United Nations offers to assist them in solving their problems.

The United Nations has been especially preoccupied this year with developments in Indo-China—developments which not only raise fundamental questions of Charter principles but also have been accompanied by vast and tragic humanitarian problems. Naturally these matters were predominant in the discussions I had during my visit to the region. The concern of the international community has, throughout this year, been focused both on the political and military developments in Indo-China and on their humanitarian consequences. It has seemed to me that, at the level of human tragedy now prevailing in that part of the world, humanitarian concerns must be attended to without delay.

This view is in no sense intended to downgrade the importance of a political settlement in the area. The situation which has followed the long and cruel war in Indo-China not only threatens the peace and stability of South-East Asia; it could very well also become a threat to world peace. It is of the utmost importance that the process of adjustment start at once and be carried on in a constructive and forward-looking spirit by all parties. As I have already informed them, I am ready to provide any assistance which the Governments concerned may think useful or desirable.

In this as in other situations that have recently arisen, it is imperative that all efforts be directed towards finding a settlement in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of all States, non-interference in internal affairs and the non-use of force.

III

Of the great political problems for which the Organization has specific responsibilities, the Middle East continues to be the most urgent and complex. There can be no doubt that this question is central to the political, economic and military stability of the world. As long as uncertainty, discord, frustration and violence prevail in the Middle East, the world will continue to live with a profoundly destabilizing element in its affairs and with a grave and continuing risk of future disaster.

The Middle East problem is so sensitive that it is virtually impossible to make any suggestions or proposals about it without upsetting some, or sometimes all, of the parties concerned. This sensitivity has been faced by the succession of mediators, representatives, negotiators and good offices missions that have tried to

be of assistance in the last 32 years. The question is how long the world, let alone the peoples of the Middle East, can afford to go on living with this explosive issue in its midst.

The dramatic developments which led to the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel have created a new situation in the area. It is a measure of the complexities of the Middle East problem that this event has given rise to controversy and division. Once again, understanding and far-sightedness, while maintaining principles and vital interests, are essential in what would otherwise be a hopeless situation. It is now more than ever necessary that all of the parties concerned review their position with the future rather than the past in mind.

A just and lasting peace in the Middle East can ultimately only be achieved through a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the question, including in particular the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Evidently, all parties concerned must be involved. I believe that the United Nations, if used with imagination and forbearance, offers in this regard unique possibilities which have not yet been fully utilized, and I hope that these possibilities will be more seriously examined in the coming months. For example, as I have previously suggested, an international conference, properly prepared, might well provide a way out of the present dangerous situation. Evidently a serious process of consultation with all of the parties will have to precede such an international meeting.

In the meantime, the practical involvement of the United Nations has continued to be mainly in the field of peace-keeping—the unceasing effort to keep down the temperature and to avert the confrontations which could so easily lead to widespread conflict and make all movement towards peace impossible. I shall revert later in this report to the subject of peace-keeping operations.

I must, however, mention here the situation in southern Lebanon. The most explosive elements of the Middle East situation exist in close proximity in and around southern Lebanon and their interaction represents both a national tragedy for Lebanon and a constant threat to the wider peace. In recent weeks there has been a serious escalation of violence in this area, resulting in civilian casualties, heavy damage and the flight of many inhabitants. After repeated efforts, an uneasy cease-fire is in effect at the time of writing. This tragic and volatile situation is a reflection of the wider problems of the region and will not be finally resolved until solid progress on those problems is made. In the meantime, we shall continue our efforts through United Nations representatives in the area, and especially the Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to maintain the present relative calm. The situation in this troubled and tragic area has been for many years a vicious circle of violence and reprisal in which the perennial losers have been the civilian population. I appeal to all concerned to co-operate with UNIFIL and to show restraint in maintaining a cessation of firing and hostilities pending the time when a more radical improvement in the situation is possible.

Developments have been disappointing in Zimbabwe and Namibia, for which the United Nations has a special concern. The difficulty in resolving the question of Zimbabwe and the now critical situation in that Territory are causes for grave anxiety. An enduring solution of this problem can only be assured if there exists a constitution which has the agreement and support of all parties concerned. The internal settlement as well as the elections held under it do not meet this requirement and cannot, therefore, be recognized as forming a basis for genuine majority rule. Renewed efforts must be made to bring all the parties together to co-operate on an acceptable and lasting settlement. Unless this can be done soon, there is a serious danger that all the progress made on this question will be lost in bloodshed, disorder and ruin with serious implications for the security of the whole region. I hope very much that the ideas and plans which emerged from the recent Commonwealth Conference at Lusaka may provide the means of achieving such a settlement. Meanwhile, it is important that all Member States adhere to the measures called for by the Security Council and work together in resolving this problem.

A year ago there seemed good reason to expect an early solution to the problem of Namibia on the basis of the plan of action approved by the Security Council. Unfortunately, the establishment of a United Nations presence in Namibia to supervise and control elections has been delayed. The full co-operation of all concerned is essential to the implementation of the Security Council's plan of action. Although difficulties have arisen over the interpretation of certain provisions of the plan, I hope that current talks will result in the necessary clarifications so that we can proceed, with the co-operation of all concerned, to practical action. After so much effort has been made, it would indeed be regrettable if we were unable to achieve the final adjustments necessary for success.

The present state of affairs in Namibia and Zimbabwe has serious implications for the security and economic future of the whole region, involving, as it does, continued loss of life in those countries as well as large-scale raids into Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia, with resulting casualties and widespread destruction. It is absolutely vital that means be found to make practical progress on these two problems without sacrificing the principles laid down by the United Nations.

Our aim should be the stable and prosperous future of southern Africa as a whole. This will not be achieved, however, as long as the problem of *apartheid* persists. One of the great challenges confronting the United Nations and all the peoples of the region is the absolute necessity of transforming the racial situation in southern Africa so that men and women of different races can coexist and exercise their rights as equals.

Another area of conflict with which the United Nations has been intimately involved, both in its peace-keeping and its peace-making roles, is Cyprus. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which has been there for more than 15 years, continues to perform an indispensable function

in maintaining calm in the island. At the same time, I have pursued the good offices mission entrusted to me by the Security Council to promote a just and lasting settlement. To this end, I convened a high-level meeting at Nicosia last May under my personal auspices. That meeting resulted in a 10-point agreement calling for the resumption of the intercommunal talks and setting forth the basis and priorities for them. While the talks were resumed amid high hopes, they soon encountered difficulties which necessitated an early recess. I have instructed my representatives to continue our efforts to overcome the difficulties in the way of restarting the talks in accordance with last May's high-level accord and the priorities established in that agreement.

The present situation in this regard comprises two sets of difficulties. One concerns the stated negotiating positions of the parties. The other relates to political problems that they face in tackling the compromises and accommodations that are essential if the talks are to have any meaning. Time and again it has proved possible to bridge important differences between the parties and to agree on guidelines and priorities that held out the prospect of progress towards a settlement. Time and again the momentum generated by these agreements has been allowed to dissipate. Moreover, the existing *status quo* tends to create a dynamic of its own, which does not necessarily facilitate an agreed solution. It seems to me, however, that a far-sighted and determined approach, based on the existing guidelines and accords, could lead to a rapid improvement of the situation in the island that would serve the interests of all concerned and would be vastly preferable to continuing to cling to an unsatisfactory and potentially unstable *status quo*. This could at the same time clear the way for a comprehensive political settlement, based on the fundamental and legitimate rights of the two communities and on the right of all Cypriots to a better and more peaceful future.

IV

The United Nations now has five peace-keeping operations in the field. A sixth operation, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), has recently lapsed, and much thought and effort have been devoted to a prospective operation in Namibia, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG).

These operations are interrelated both by their basic nature and by the fact that the success and credibility of existing operations have an effect on the acceptability and chances of success of future peace-keeping efforts, since confidence is an essential element of successful peace-keeping. Peace-keeping is one of the original creations of the United Nations and is a valuable instrument in the Security Council's efforts to control conflict and maintain international peace and security. It is a delicate and complex mechanism which can only function properly if certain basic conditions exist and if all concerned are prepared to give it their full support and co-operation. Otherwise, peace-keeping operations can become controversial and even self-defeating, with a consequent decline in the confidence of Member States in this very useful and innovative technique.

Peace-keeping operations tend to be set up in the heat of the moment to defuse a crisis and contain a conflict which may otherwise spread or seriously upset the fragile balance of world peace. The resolutions which initiate these operations set goals which are sometimes not easily achievable in reality. A prolonged failure to achieve such objectives tends to generate a mood of frustration which, in the long run, may even jeopardize the future of the operation itself, regardless of the service it has rendered or is rendering in controlling a conflict. This in turn is discouraging to the troops in the field, to the Governments which provide them and to the members of the Security Council which set up the operation in the first place.

A fundamental prerequisite of successful peace-keeping operations is the co-operation of the parties concerned. If one or other of these opposes, or has strong reservations about, the objectives of the operation, it is unlikely to be completely successful and will in all probability become an additional source of controversy and friction. The problem then arises whether the actual value of the operation in terms of maintaining peace justifies its continuation in the face of opposition. This is a crucial question which should be considered on its merits and with the utmost seriousness by all concerned.

When a peace-keeping operation is firmly based on a detailed agreement between the parties in conflict and they are prepared to abide by that agreement, it is relatively easy to maintain. This has been the case, for example, with UNEF and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). When, however, an operation is mounted in an emergency with ambiguous or controversial objectives and terms of reference, and on assumptions which are not wholly realistic, it is likely to present far greater difficulties. This is undoubtedly the case with UNIFIL.

I am firmly convinced that UNIFIL has performed, and is performing, an absolutely essential task of conflict control in one of the most sensitive and explosive parts of the world. This seems to me to be an overriding argument for maintaining it in spite of all difficulties and disagreements. While I shall persist in my efforts to achieve the objectives set for UNIFIL by the Security Council, I think it is important that the current value of the operation, in all its difficulty, should be more fully recognized. The easiest way to prove the value of the task UNIFIL is now performing would be to withdraw the Force. In the present circumstances this would undoubtedly be a highly irresponsible and almost certainly disastrous experiment, and I do not believe that anyone properly informed of the situation would seriously advocate it.

This being the case, I hope we shall have the continuing support and understanding of Member States, the parties concerned and, indeed, the media in the very difficult period which UNIFIL is now experiencing. The Force was put into southern Lebanon precisely because the situation there was dangerous,

complex and not susceptible of any obvious or easy solution. While searching for the way to a resolution of the basic problems involved, we should resist the temptation to ascribe them to the operation which is gallantly trying to keep the situation under control.

The United Nations Emergency Force, the mandate of which lapsed on 24 July, had served for nearly six years. It was set up urgently in a time of intense international tension and was deployed in a confused and still violent conflict situation. It was remarkably successful in stabilizing the cease-fire and implementing successive disengagement agreements. It has assisted the transition from conditions of war to a peace treaty in its area of operations. The Force has been an outstanding peace-keeping operation. I take this opportunity to express warm appreciation to the commanders, officers and men and to the civilian component of the Force for their dedicated and effective service to the United Nations.

The future United Nations role in the former UNEF area is still not clear at the time this report is being written. The military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO) have meanwhile remained in the area under existing decisions of the Security Council.

While in no way detracting from the importance and excellent service of later and larger peace-keeping operations, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the observers of UNTSO, this oldest of United Nations peace-keeping missions, which has operated continuously in the Middle East for more than 31 years, often in conflict conditions. Established originally in 1948 to supervise the first truce called for by the Security Council in the Middle East, UNTSO has carried out over the years a variety of peace-keeping tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council in the light of the changing circumstances in the region. Its dedicated officers from 17 countries have long since established a universally accepted reputation for objective and accurate reporting even in the most dangerous circumstances. They have assisted in de-escalating innumerable incidents, in arranging cease-fires, in performing countless tasks of a humanitarian nature and in providing a vital and unique link between parties in conflict. They have provided the initial framework and staff upon which all the successive peace-keeping forces in the region have been founded and have assisted these forces in performing their various tasks. They have suffered serious casualties in carrying out their essential but little-publicized work. They continue to be an invaluable resource for peace in the Middle East. The United Nations owes a debt of gratitude to this international group of courageous officers.

The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus has been stationed in the island since 1964 and has performed invaluable services in maintaining peace in a deeply troubled area. After the events of 1974 the role of UNFICYP changed fundamentally, but until now its continued presence has been considered essential to maintaining peace and the necessary atmosphere for negotiations on a settlement of the Cyprus problem. While the need to maintain peaceful conditions in the island is undiminished, the intercommunal negotiations have been making very slow progress and, as of the writing of this report, are in recess. The experience of UNFICYP raises in an acute manner the question of the relationship between peace-keeping and peace-making functions of the United Nations. The risks involved in the premature withdrawal of a peace-keeping force are well known and can scarcely be envisaged at this time in regard to UNFICYP. However, the time may soon come for a careful re-examination of United Nations arrangements in the island in the light of present realities.

Peace-keeping is an invaluable addition to the armoury of peace. It is still, however, to some extent in an evolutionary stage and must be used with great care and attention to the fundamental principles and conditions involved. If this is done, I have no doubt that it will develop into an increasingly consistent and dependable support for international peace and security.

V

During the past year, the world continued to face increasing economic difficulties. In almost every area, economic problems multiplied. Many countries experienced unacceptable levels of inflation and unemployment. Exchange rates have been unstable and volatile. Protectionism has increased. Foreign trade has stagnated. Economic growth has been slow and erratic in industrialized countries. The developing countries have found it impossible to finance reasonable rates of development. Official development assistance has stagnated at about half the target figure agreed in the International Development Strategy. The situation is becoming critical, and a continuation of present trends would seriously jeopardize the pace of development in developing countries for years to come. This in turn would reduce growth and prosperity in the industrialized countries. The forces at work in the world economy call for strong co-ordinated action to remove the structural causes of the present difficulties.

Under these circumstances, it is regrettable that there is a growing disparity between urgent economic problems and the inadequate responses by the international community. The ongoing multilateral negotiations have so far failed to achieve results commensurate with the magnitude of the needs.

There has been some movement during the past year—the recent trade negotiations undertaken by the parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the agreement on the fundamental elements of a common fund for commodities, and the enlargement of quotas and the increase in special drawing rights in September 1978. These steps, welcome as they are, fall far short of what is needed. The GATT agreements provide a framework for the fight against future protectionism but give little immediate relief for countries most affected by present protectionist measures. Much more needs to be done to establish the common fund and to implement the other components of the Integrated Programme for Commodities. The enlarged quotas and the new special drawing rights are clearly inadequate to deal with the increasing

balance-of-payments deficits and accumulated foreign debt of developing countries.

The fifth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was the first occasion on which an international conference specifically focused on the subject of structural change. The results were limited and disappointing. That session showed clearly that many countries were still reluctant to accept the full implications of growing interdependence in the world economy.

The multilateral negotiations now taking place within the framework of the United Nations are clearly facing difficulties. The Committee of the Whole Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 adopted two sets of agreed conclusions. One dealt with the transfer of resources and one with agriculture and food issues. Although these constituted limited progress, the Committee has not succeeded in providing impetus to other negotiations within the United Nations system. The Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy made no progress in its first sessions in drafting the Strategy.

In the face of obviously pressing economic needs, such slow progress in negotiations is unacceptable. It is essential that all States should take urgent heed of the dangers of delay and reassess their positions in the light of their long-term interests and needs.

A new impetus in North-South negotiations would do much to dispel the present climate of uncertainty and disenchantment. This new impetus can only be found by a real political will to reach solutions. The United Nations is well equipped with machinery for intergovernmental discussions, consultations and negotiations. It has the capacity to support negotiations if Member States are prepared to use it with determination to find solutions to the problems besetting economic development.

Political support needs to be mobilized if acceptable solutions are to be reached. Brief high-level meetings could play an essential role in this process. Such meetings could also identify possibilities for agreement and priorities for negotiations. Naturally I stand ready to lend all necessary assistance in furthering such an approach. There are, in addition, other important areas for urgent international co-operation. Two of these have recently been highlighted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development.

The energy problem has emerged as a central and immediate concern for all nations. The progressive exhaustion of known cheap supplies of oil, while energy demands continue to increase, poses a formidable challenge for the international community. It also has profound political implications. Nations will need to change from a pattern of energy consumption dominated by oil to a more energy-saving pattern of growth, relying on more diversified sources of energy. If this transition is to take place in an orderly way, without putting undue strains on the world economy, intensive co-operation among States will be necessary. In addition, considerable efforts will be needed within each State. Planning and co-ordination will be required to harmonize the interests of producers, processors, users, poorer consumers and environmentalists and to achieve an equitable distribution of the burden of necessary adjustments, nationally and internationally.

In recent times, I have been intensifying my contacts with Governments on the question of energy to investigate their perception of the problem and to determine what initiative might be taken within the United Nations in this area. From these contacts I sense a growing recognition that in the future the question of energy should be a priority issue in the North-South dialogue.

Given the interdependence of the problems of the world economy, energy cannot be treated in isolation from other issues. Energy is particularly closely connected to international financial and monetary questions such as reserve creation, payments financing and development assistance. The time has come for the United Nations to work towards a balanced and integrated set of agreements and understandings in these areas. In doing so, we must find ways to ensure sustainable supplies of energy for the world economy while avoiding the excessive depletion of natural resources at the global and national levels, and remaining consistent with the right of countries to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.

Determined action by the international community is thus required in three areas:

—We need to organize our efforts to bring the negotiations on the implementation of the new international economic order out of their present state of stalemate;

—We need to deal vigorously with the area of energy, which is a major challenge, and to launch a co-ordinated and imaginative effort by the world community in this field;

—We need to address the urgent problems of the oil-importing developing countries in a concerted and effective way.

It is my firm conviction that the United Nations is the place where all these efforts could be combined.

VI

The Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, at the end of its eighth session this summer, approved a programme of work providing for the adoption of a convention on the law of the sea next year. Although some issues have yet to be solved, the delegations attending the Conference unanimously agreed that it was possible, as a result of the many sessions of informal negotiations, to adopt formally a draft convention during the spring and act upon it during the summer with the aim of adopting a convention before the end of August 1980.

The long-sought convention can now become a reality if all the States participating in this, the longest and most comprehensive diplomatic conference ever convened under the auspices of the United Nations, make a last effort to achieve mutual accommodation

on the few remaining issues. Many questions that appeared intractable when the Conference began its work almost six years ago seem to have found solutions that States can accept in a spirit of compromise.

Vital principles and interests are at stake, and the outcome of this Conference could greatly influence the willingness of Governments to make full use of the machinery of the United Nations to achieve international understanding on global issues. I hope, therefore, that in the final stages of the Conference, Governments, having made remarkable progress on this most difficult and complex of issues, will find it possible to reach the necessary accommodations to produce a treaty which will be of fundamental importance for the future.

VII

The past year has witnessed some advances in the cause of the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, but discouraging and grave new problems have also emerged.

While the world community has focused greater attention on human rights violations and has advanced in its recognition of the need to strengthen mechanisms for the protection of the individual, the number of instances of overt assaults on human dignity, sometimes on a massive scale, remains cause for deep anxiety.

Great hopes have been placed in the United Nations by peoples, persons and groups throughout the world which rightly expect the Organization to react in the face of the disregard or violation of human rights. We must realize, of course, that the United Nations has not always been in a position fully to meet these expectations. As I have pointed out in the past, the effectiveness of the United Nations in matters of human rights is inextricably linked with the attitudes of its Member States. It is the responsibility of each Member of the United Nations under the Charter to ensure respect for human rights within its jurisdiction; indeed the provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights are addressed essentially to Governments.

At the same time, the United Nations as an institution has important human rights responsibilities of its own to discharge under the Charter and under procedures and methods established by the appropriate deliberative organs. These include the setting up of internationally recognized standards for the protection and observance of human rights, marshalling the influence of the international community and of public opinion in support of such standards, monitoring the discharge of certain obligations assumed by Member States in this regard, and in certain cases inquiring into and drawing attention to instances of gross violations. In some instances, the United Nations has been able to act in unison despite the sensitivity of the issues involved. However, much remains to be done. The United Nations can realize its full potential in this field only when Member States face up to their responsibilities, as well as accept and live up to the trust which is placed upon them.

Among the more positive developments during the past year has been the wide-ranging debate on ways and means of improving the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of human rights which took place in the General Assembly, in the Commission on Human Rights and in the Economic and Social Council. This debate is to continue in the future. For my own part, I am prepared to consider all useful suggestions for strengthening the contribution of the Secretariat in a field which is of fundamental importance to the future development of our society.

Efforts have continued to be made in international organs which deal with human rights to instil a greater awareness of the relevance of human rights to development. The Commission on Human Rights has been considering an important study on the international dimensions of the right to development and has now requested further studies on the regional and national dimensions of this fundamental right. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has also been considering the relationship between human rights and the new international economic order. Emerging from these studies is a recognition that there is a human right to development, that respect for human rights can create a climate in which people are inspired to greater efforts for development, and that human rights considerations must feature as essential components in the integrated approach to development.

Significant decisions have been taken during the past year by United Nations organs in dealing with situations of gross violation of human rights. Investigations have been initiated in some cases, individual experts have been designated to look into others, and in some instances I have been requested to undertake contacts with Governments with a view to discussing the human rights situations in their respective countries.

The international community still tends to approach this delicate problem with caution in view of the other aspects of intergovernmental relationships which are often involved. For obvious reasons non-governmental organizations can afford to be, and are, much more forthright in their approach. I understand the reasons for governmental caution, reasons which also apply to some extent to the possibilities of the Secretary-General in many human rights cases. It is absolutely essential, however, that a cautious approach should not be allowed to degenerate into expediency on so vital a matter of principle.

Advances continue to be made towards the universal ratification of the International Covenants on Human Rights. However, the rate of ratification or accession needs to be stepped up if the goal of universality is to be attained without a long delay. In the Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Governments engage in a dialogue with the Committee in which their political, economic and social systems are subjected to international scrutiny from the point of view of their compliance with international human rights laws. The Economic and Social Council has also been working on the procedure for considering reports from States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The United Nations continues to further and encourage regional, national and local activities for the promotion and protection of human rights, and has sponsored world-wide and regional seminars on these topics in the past year. An important step in the strengthening of regional human rights machinery has been the appointment by the Organization of American States of a newly-constituted Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Seminar now taking place at Monrovia on the advisability of establishing an African regional commission on human rights is another encouraging step towards the strengthening of regional human rights machinery.

In the International Year of the Child, we have been reminded very forcefully of the stark deprivations suffered by children in many parts of the world and we have seen that all too often children are also victims of violations of human rights. It is absolutely intolerable that children should be made to suffer in this manner in our day and age. I earnestly hope that this and other objectives of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child will be furthered by the outstanding efforts which Governments and non-governmental organizations have made this year to promote the interests and rights of children all over the world.

For my own part, I have continued to exert my best endeavours on behalf of human rights whenever I consider that my actions may be of assistance to the persons or groups concerned. I am more convinced than ever that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms must be at the heart of our greatest task here at the United Nations, which is to build a just and equitable world community for the future.

VIII

One of the agonies of the human condition has been the uprooting of millions of people from their homes and families to face unknown dangers, want and despair. To alleviate this appalling tide of human suffering, the United Nations has been deeply and increasingly engaged on behalf of refugees throughout the world.

Two important meetings were convened this year to deal with the problem of refugees. One was held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in regard to the refugee situation in Africa, the other at Geneva, on the problems of the refugees and displaced persons of South-East Asia. Both had positive results.

The Arusha Conference reaffirmed the principle that the granting of asylum is a peaceful and humanitarian act which should not be regarded as unfriendly by any State. It also stressed the importance of the scrupulous observance of the principle of *non-refoulement*. These principles are as pertinent in other situations resulting in the exodus of refugees as they are in Africa.

For the Indo-Chinese refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has conducted an operation of growing dimensions. As the exodus of Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean refugees continued to increase, however, and the countries of first asylum found the consequences so unbearable that they felt compelled to drive new refugees away, it became apparent that an even larger and more dramatic effort was required. The spectre of men, women and children drifting on crowded boats and often drowning, and of others on land, abandoned amid conflict, anarchy and famine, aroused the conscience of Governments and peoples in every quarter of the globe.

For these reasons, in consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and a number of concerned Governments, I decided to convene a meeting at a high level to deal with this humanitarian emergency.

I much appreciated the response of Member States to this initiative and their co-operation during the meeting. I am grateful to the many who made specific commitments of additional assistance to the refugee programme and to the related measures which were agreed on to reduce the dimensions of the problem and the tragic loss of life which had attended the unregulated and massive exodus that had been taking place. Offers of resettlement opportunities doubled from 125,000 to 260,000, and most substantial new pledges in cash and kind, exceeding $160 million, were received. The participants were, I believe, as gratified as I was that so much could be accomplished in a two-day meeting of this kind.

In this undertaking, the essential objective was to meet immediate humanitarian needs. This in no sense detracts from the vital necessity of acceptable political solutions. It is essential that all concerned try to advance from the present stage of recrimination and conflict to a statesmanlike and far-sighted effort to resolve the underlying problems of this tragic and war-torn area. In the meantime, urgent steps must be taken to preserve the lives of the Indo-Chinese refugees and displaced persons and of the ravaged Kampuchean population. This must be done despite the political complexities, of which we are all aware.

IX

Like all political institutions in this age of change, the United Nations must face the problem of the manageability and suitability of its organization and procedures for confronting effectively the immense and pressing problems of our time. While I believe that most representatives shared the apprehensions in this respect expressed in my report on the work of the Organization last year, and more or less agreed with my analysis of the problem, very little seems to have changed in the intervening 12 months. In fact, in some respects things have become worse. To take one practical example, documentation: the situation is now such that the existing United Nations services can no longer carry the steadily increasing load. This threatened breakdown of a service which Member States more or less take for granted is symptomatic of the strain imposed on the international system by the steady inflation of activity and the lack of effective review and restraint.

I have been left in no doubt that many Governments of Member States are increasingly concerned at the drain on financial and personnel resources entailed in

the continuing upward spiral of international meetings and related activities. It is apparently widely believed that action by the Secretariat could significantly diminish this trend. I wish therefore to state with all possible emphasis that the current and continuing proliferation of activities is directly attributable to the decisions of Member States in the various organs of the United Nations. These decisions, sometimes taken in an unco-ordinated and even casual way, create new institutions, new demands for documentation and services and generally add to the workload of services which have not been commensurately expanded. There is often, I may add, a wide discrepancy between such decisions of Governments and the views expressed by their representatives in the intergovernmental organs dealing with administrative and budgetary questions.

We must be realistic in trying to deal with this institutional inflation, which is not a new phenomenon nor one unique to the United Nations. We have to recognize that political considerations play a dominant role in organization and that the United Nations system, for better or for worse, is no exception to this rule. We have to accept that a perfectly logical and functional institutional system is probably not within our reach and that we must make the existing one function better. We also have to accept a certain degree of institutional escapism as the Governments of the world grapple with new and overwhelming problems. By this I mean that it is sometimes easier to call a conference, or even to found a new institution, than to confront a complex problem directly.

Within these limits, we must renew our efforts to rationalize our institutions, to make them more effective for their stated purposes, to direct and co-ordinate their activities for the maximum cumulative effect and to make them as responsive as possible to the real problems of our time. I and the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, together with our colleagues in the Secretariat and in the specialized agencies, will continue our efforts towards these ends. But these efforts cannot be effective without the active co-operation and understanding of the States members of the organizations concerned.

In an effort to improve the working methods of the General Assembly, I presented to the membership in June this year a report on the rationalization of the procedures and organization of the Assembly. Recognizing that a major modification of existing practices and procedures would require careful deliberation and lengthy negotiation among the Members, I have advanced a series of relatively modest proposals for improving the Assembly's work which will, I hope, command substantial support at the very beginning of the thirty-fourth session. The general objective of these proposals is to overcome some of the difficulties of coping, within the original time-frame allocated 34 years ago to the General Assembly session, with a workload involving four times as many items and three times the membership which existed when the United Nations was founded. I would hope that these proposals are only a beginning and that Member States will wish to continue the process of improvement with more radical steps.

The Geneva meeting on Indo-Chinese refugees, which I have already mentioned in its humanitarian context, may provide some ideas for future efforts to cope with pressing problems on a basis different from the more traditional conference approach. With the full co-operation of Member States and in spite of the different political preoccupations of many of them, we were able to hold a short, business-like meeting devoted to a single primary purpose. The practical results of this meeting attest both to the spirit in which the participants came to it and to the usefulness of the method. I shall welcome suggestions from Member States as to other major problems which they feel might best be dealt with through *ad hoc* meetings of this kind.

X

The capacity of an organization to deal effectively with its business and to be seen to have a useful impact is an essential basis for public confidence. In the United Nations, this simple maxim is complicated by the immense diversity of the public involved, and by the scale and complexity of the problems dealt with.

I feel obliged to say frankly that I continue to be disturbed by prevailing public attitudes to the United Nations and by our apparent inability to generate the kind of broad public support, confidence and understanding without which we shall not achieve the great objectives upon which mankind's future prosperity—even survival—may depend. It is true that there are moments, usually moments of international crisis and apprehension, when the potential of the Organization is realized and its usefulness in maintaining international peace and security is widely understood. It is true that there are many countries, especially in the developing world, where the assistance and the great programmes of the United Nations system in the economic and social field are appreciated and regarded as essential guides to the future. It is true that Governments faced with insoluble or unbearable problems do bring them to the appropriate organ of the United Nations in order to get help and share the burden. All of these reactions are important signs of what the United Nations can and should usefully do.

What has not so far been adequately developed is a general and consistent support of the aims and activities of the United Nations as a whole, as a working model for a genuine world community. This is particularly obvious in the response, or lack of it, to many of the decisions of the Security Council. It is clear also in the reluctance of many Governments to bring to the United Nations problems which obviously fall under the terms of the Charter until there is no other alternative and the problems have become too explosive and dangerous to ignore.

This lack of consistent support for the world Organization, created by Governments in 1945 to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, may not seem to be of too great account in normal times, al-

though it certainly means that the United Nations cannot always adequately perform the functions it was set up to perform. There is, however, a very real danger of losing precious time in acquiring what all agree is needed—the habit and experience necessary to make our world work in the new and highly complex circumstances of the 1980s. More dangerous still is the ever-present possibility that we shall be confronted, for a variety of expected and unexpected reasons, with a dramatic threat to international peace and security which the United Nations, in its present stage of development, may not be able to deal with.

These two considerations seem to me the most cogent reasons for renewing our efforts to gain widespread confidence and support among the peoples of the world. It is necessary to convince people that the struggle for peace, justice, equity and human dignity which is waged here at the United Nations is very much their struggle, and that their support, understanding and, if necessary, criticism, can make a real difference to the outcome. We shall not be able to do this by information programmes alone. We shall need, on important issues above all, to be able to show that the world Organization can, and does, treat them on their merits; that it can, and does, produce results which, however imperfect, constitute the difference between order and chaos, or even, in extreme circumstances, between peace and destruction.

This is a challenge which all of us have to accept if we are seriously to live up to the responsibility and the privilege of working in one way or another for the United Nations. If we can increasingly live up to this challenge, we shall also be in a better position to ask that the media report more comprehensively and positively on our work in all of its aspects.

Public attitudes to the work of the United Nations range from strong support, through a mixture of lack of interest, boredom and even contempt, to active hostility in a few cases. Some of these attitudes can be explained by special circumstances. Others can only be explained by a failure to communicate and to convince. There is very little general understanding of the United Nations as a political institution, or as a system of specialized organizations, evolving in the new complexities and cross-currents of the contemporary world. There is almost no general knowledge of its capacity or importance as a balancing factor, as a safety-valve or in conflict control. As the memories of the Second World War fade, there seems to be less and less comprehension of the necessity of building, step by step, the framework of a working world community capable of withstanding the storms and facing the common problems of an uncertain future. Instead, small, and more or less irrelevant, matters tend to figure large in the popular image of the world Organization.

It is this situation which needs to be changed if we are to proceed from more or less abstract discussion to the phase of realization which at every step will require solid popular support. I hope that all Governments of Member States will consider this fundamental requirement of their Organization. I hope they will help us in the Secretariat, as well as all the voluntary organizations which are willing and anxious to be of assistance, to build the public support and confidence required if we are to make the United Nations increasingly effective.

In this connexion, I am pleased to note that at its last session the General Assembly reaffirmed the necessity to foster in world opinion better knowledge of the aims and achievements of the United Nations, including the principles and purposes of the new international economic order. The Assembly requested me to take the necessary measures to ensure the close collaboration of Member States, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and other information bodies in framing public information policies and programmes of the United Nations system. The Assembly also established a Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, consisting of 41 Member States.

In the light of the constructive and helpful debate which has taken place this year in the Committee, as well as in its *Ad Hoc* Working Group, I look forward to receiving the general guidelines within which new directions for United Nations information activities may be sought and practical measures taken with a view to widening public support for the Organization.

XI

In my last annual report I stated that the concept of international civil service is at the heart of efforts to build an effective system of world order. For that reason especially, I believe that Member States should keep this basic issue constantly in mind. I have to say frankly that in my view the international civil service is at present at a critical juncture. Underlying this situation is the fact that an increasing number of Member States seem less willing to observe, in practice, the obligations they assumed under the Charter with respect to the independent nature of the Secretariat. This trend is self-sustaining in the sense that, if one State or group of States does not honour these obligations, other States tend to follow suit for fear of losing their stake in the Secretariat. These developments put at risk the noble and essential experiment outlined in the Charter of building a truly international Secretariat working together with a common purpose for the United Nations.

In previous years I have commented on the attitudes and actions required to ensure the achievement of an effective, stable and independent international civil service. The full co-operation and understanding of Governments in this process is still not forthcoming, and I believe that there is an urgent need to re-evaluate our positions and attitudes towards the international civil service in the full knowledge that there are differing views on the matter. It will not be in the interests of the international community or of the Member States if the realization of the concept of an independent international civil service is so frustrated that it becomes more difficult to recruit, on a broad geographical basis, the highly competent and dedicated men and women we need to serve the cause of peace.

I mentioned the divergent views held by Member States concerning the very concept of an international civil service. It is evident that changes are taking place around us which have altered some of the basic professional requirements of the service. These changes have also affected the attitudes and commitment of staff members with respect to the Secretariat. We are in the process of trying to come to terms with these factors which, if neglected, will only weaken the international civil service. We are in particular making efforts to improve the situation with respect to the position of women and the role of developing countries.

Obviously it will take time to resolve these and other basic problems. During this process it is essential to strengthen our commitment to the principles and the objectives of the Charter on this question. The evolution of an effective international civil service is essential to the future usefulness of the United Nations in all its diverse fields of activity. Provided we have the commitment of the Member States to this goal and their understanding of the problems involved, we should be in a position to make significant progress on this fundamental problem.

XII

In keeping with the commitment I made during the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, I have pursued a determined policy of budgetary constraint which is reflected in the significant slow-down in the rate of real growth of my regular budget proposals. While the initial budget estimates for the previous and current bienniums provided for rates of real increase of 3.5 and 2.2 per cent respectively, the initial estimates for the 1980-1981 biennium have been limited to a real growth rate of less than 1 per cent.

The increasing financial burden imposed on Member States requires that we persevere and succeed in our efforts to achieve budgetary restraint as well as the most effective utilization of resources through their redeployment, as appropriate, and a rearrangement of priorities. The results of these efforts are reflected in the proposed programme budget for 1980-1981, which has been predicated on extensive redeployment of resources and in which a significant number of new activities are to be financed out of the resources released as a result of the completion or discontinuation of old activities. I believe the results of this first stage in the introduction of the programme monitoring system are encouraging and I intend therefore to extend it at the various levels of programme and resource management.

Difficulties continue to be experienced in the financing of peace-keeping operations, the contributions for which—whether assessed or voluntary—have been insufficient to meet their continuing costs. Troop-contributing countries are not being reimbursed on a current and full basis in accordance with the rates agreed upon. They have conveyed to me their very serious concern over this situation, which places a heavy burden on their Governments. It is becoming clear that the continuation of this trend may make it difficult or impossible for some troop-contributing countries with smaller resources to participate in peace-keeping operations; this in turn may militate against the important principle of equitable geographical distribution in the composition of peace-keeping forces. In any case, as a matter of equity, it is not acceptable that the burden of the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations should fall so heavily on a small group of States which have voluntarily undertaken the responsibility for providing contingents for these operations.

An important question of principle is involved here. The maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility, which should be borne by all States Members of the United Nations.

I therefore appeal to all Governments to give the United Nations peace-keeping operations all possible financial support. In particular, I appeal to those Member States which have not paid their assessments to reconsider their position.

XIII

Until the present time, for a variety of complex political reasons, it has usually proved difficult, if not impossible, for the international community to take positive actions in advance of events. On the political side especially, the time for concerted action has tended to come only when conflict or disaster is imminent or has already occurred. The actions of the international community have often been more in the nature of curative or palliative reactions rather than of bold initiatives to forestall problems or to make better arrangements for the future. This tendency has limited the possibilities of the United Nations as an instrument for concerting the policies of Members States towards constructive goals.

It is not enough to await new—and unthinkable—global disasters in order to bring about a new phase in international relations—a phase of concerted statesmanship posivitely oriented towards the future rather than dominated by, and reacting to, events and conditions from the past.

Obviously the primary objective of the United Nations must remain the survival of the human race and its environment in the best possible conditions. But this effort is likely in the end to be abortive, unless at the same time we progressively build up the working elements of a global civilization and order unprecedentedly wide in its scope and diversity. This will require, among other things, increasingly effective institutions, the universal acceptance of a minimum basic code of international conduct, and a steady growth of the civility, trust and respect with which nations, as well as individuals, deal with each other. If these aims could be achieved, many doors now closed to progress would be opened, and many precious resources, both human and material, could be used in more constructive and useful ways.

Excessive parochialism can be a dangerous and wasteful force in international as well as national affairs. The United Nations is unique in providing a place where national interests can be articulated, group interests identified and global interests distilled

and worked for. If national and group interests can interact in the United Nations within this third dimension of global priorities and with a determination to get real results, it should be possible to move forward steadily on many of the great issues where we now seem to be becalmed.

There are many positive elements which should encourage such a process. Despite the unprecedented level and destructive capacity of armaments, there appears to be a general determination to avoid a third world war. We have the instruments and understandings, in the United Nations and outside it, to carry out these intentions if there is the will to do so. The age of colonial domination, in the classic sense of the term, is over, and instead we have a world of independent nations. We have a technological capacity undreamed of 30 years ago. We have a new understanding and awareness of the nature of our economic and social problems and of the generation of global problems which are in some measure the result of technological revolution. And we have at least some of the instruments which might be used to deal with them. Racism and prejudice have dwindled and are everywhere under attack. The concept of human rights is becoming an important factor in the life of humanity. New methods of conflict control, such as United Nations peace-keeping, have emerged and have proved their value. There is a determined effort to attack poverty and inequity on a global scale.

In the presence of such undoubted gains, it is worth considering why there is a prevalent mood of anxiety and even bewilderment. Why do Governments continue, often in contravention of the Charter, to take shelter in narrow, nationalistic policies and to use the means provided in the Charter only as a last resort when they find themselves facing impossible risks? It is clear that a lack of mutual confidence and good faith still prevents the 151 Governments which have agreed to abide by the Charter from making it work as intended.

I believe that we are now witnessing some signs of a growing mutual confidence and good faith, often originating in working relationships on difficult issues here at the United Nations. This is an essential element for a move forward from the present age of doubt and anxiety to a new and more generous period of statesmanship. There is nothing basically wrong with the existing international mechanism except the apparent inability of Governments to use it to its full potential. For that to happen, we need to develop a confidence in, and a vision of, the future which is not incessantly clouded or neutralized by narrow aims or temporary setbacks. With confidence and vision the United Nations is capable of becoming a decisive instrument in human development.

The days of national supremacy appear to be over. The community of nations, at the outset of a new era, faces the test of an uncertain future. The United Nations was set up to help all Governments to meet that test together. I hope the Organization will be used increasingly to build the confidence and develop the vision necessary to guarantee the future.

Kurt WALDHEIM
Secretary-General