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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 26 September 1988, at 10 a.m.

President:

later:

later:

Mr. CAPUTO

Mr. RANA (Vice-President)

Mr. CAPUTO (President)

(Argentina)

(Nepal)

(Argentina)

- Opening of the general debate [9]

Statement made by:

Mr. de Abreu Sodre (Brazil)

- Address by Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Asamoah (Ghana)

Mr. Gonzales Posada (Peru)

Mr. Sorsa (Finland)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 28 September 1988, at 6 p.m. I request delegations to be good enough to provide the estimated speaking times as accurately as possible so that we can plan our meetings in an orderly way.

Mr. de ABREU SODRE (Brazil) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): Mr. President, a tradition dating back to the early days of this Organization confers upon me the privilege of being the first speaker, at the opening of our debate, to convey to you, my colleague and friend Dante Caputo, my warm and friendly congratulations on your election as President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I am certain that you will do honour to that high office with the same qualities that have marked your steady leadership of Argentine diplomacy.

I should also like to express my appreciation of and respect for Ambassador Nita Barrow, distinguished representative of Barbados, whose merits enriched our choice for the direction of our work.

I once again pay a tribute to the outstanding diplomatic talent of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Javier Perez de Cuellar. His untiring efforts in building peace and strengthening the United Nations make him worthy of the appreciation of the whole international community.

When I addressed this Assembly for the first time three years ago there prevailed in international affairs grave forebodings and repeated violations of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The language of

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confrontation between the super-Powers was becoming sharper owing to the use of advanced military technologies capable of spreading the risk of nuclear war to outer space. The persistence of localized tension and disputes frustrated the efforts to attain of the ideals of peace and security.

As I return here today I find that the world situation has improved somewhat. The practice of East-West détente, which seemed condemned to oblivion, has been reborn. The United States and the Soviet Union have finally reached a concrete agreement on disarmament. Their leaders are to be commended for this historic feat.

Some regional conflicts, the protagonists worn out by the tragic toll of death and destruction, now see the dawning of a peaceful solution. In previous speeches I have condemned the recalcitrant attitude of South Africa in blocking the process of independence for Namibia, the violence which seemed to have taken hold for good in the Gulf region and the transgression of the principles of self-determination and non-interference in Afghanistan. Today it is comforting to change my words of warning and criticism to bear witness to the promising outlook for peace efforts aimed at putting an end to those conflicts.

In looking at the clearer skies on the world political horizon, I reaffirm my reverence for the United Nations and my belief in the effectiveness of its instruments. If the world is better today than it was yesterday, we must give credit for that to the decisive contribution of the United Nations. We still have before us, however, unfinished and challenging tasks to accomplish in obedience to the provisions of the Charter. Obstructions remain to eradicating apartheid, solving the Middle East crisis, putting an end to the suffering of the people of Lebanon and bringing peace to Central America. It is my hope that at the next session of the General Assembly we may note further progress in our quest for peace and harmony among peoples.

(Mr. de Abreu Sodre, Brazil)

As the representative of a nation which has always sought the establishment of a just and democratic world order based on the participation of all, I must stress that the task of transforming the world will be complete only after the strengthening and consolidation of co-operation for economic and social development. In this respect, unlike the remarks I have just made on the world political situation, my words today will not differ in substance or in tone from those of my previous statements. Because of the lack of progress in international economic relations, Brazil once again brings to the Assembly a message of apprehension, of disappointment, and renews to the developed world its proposals and claims.

Reaffirming its historical adherence to the highest ideals of international life and faithful to the will and the nature of its people, Brazil has inscribed in its new Constitution, which is about to be promulgated, the fundamental principles of its foreign policy: national independence; priority for human rights; the self-determination of peoples; non-interference; equality among States; the peaceful settlement of disputes; the defence of peace; repudiation of terrorism and racism; and co-operation among peoples for the progress of mankind. The representatives of the Brazilian people, when expressing in the Constitution the central demands and concerns of their own society, were perfectly attuned to the aspirations of the international community. They also embodied in their new charter the greatest aspiration of our continent - the integration of Latin America.*

* Mr. Rana (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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The world, unfortunately, has come to realize how absurd is the unilateral ethos underlying the illusion that power - military, political, economic or technological power - could generate a just or even a merely stable international order. Strength cannot give birth to law, much less to peace and justice. This is what the Charter of the United Nations - and in particular its preamble - tells us.

Nevertheless there persists a disturbing tendency on the part of certain countries to place their national law above international law, both in political and in economic matters. To plead internal laws, or alleged national interests, in order to avoid compliance with obligations under international law violates the essential principle of pacta sunt servanda, which is a basic rule of civilized coexistence among nations.

The adventure of unilateralism cannot be replaced by self-contained bilateralism or selective multilateralism. Negotiations on matters of interest to the whole world community require the participation of all countries, large or small. Talks on peace and economic development, in particular, cannot be made into an empty exercise whereby power pays homage to law.

Regrettably, the atmosphere of dialogue which now brings the super-Powers closer together has not resulted in an effective readiness to widen the field of multilateral understanding. The elaboration of power schemes geared to redefining and freezing a vertically structured world order deserves nothing but condemnation.

The difficulties encountered during the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament illustrate the concern I have just voiced. The impossibility of obtaining a document based on consensus, only a few months after the first treaty on nuclear disarmament in history was signed, clearly indicates the magnitude of the obstacle hindering the participation of the international community as a whole in deliberations concerning its own survival.

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The decision made by President José Sarney to take part in that session, along with other Heads of State or Government, attests to the firmness of Brazil's stand in favour of the cause of disarmament and of its open and effective discussion in the relevant bodies.

So strong is our people's repudiation of weapons of mass destruction and so firm our purpose to develop nuclear technology exclusively for peaceful ends that the following precept is embodied in the new Brazilian Constitution: all nuclear activities in Brazilian territory will be permitted only for peaceful purposes and subject to approval by Congress.

This same spirit, already enshrined in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, prevails in the understandings between Argentina and Brazil in this field. The loyal and fruitful co-operation between the two countries belies the myth of a nuclear race in Latin America.

The constructive purpose inspiring Brazil's foreign policy led to the convening of the first meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic, which was held in Rio de Janeiro last July. Part of a region which is assuming its own identity, founded on deeply shared interests and perceptions, the South Atlantic countries were able to explore further the many paths of open dialogue among equals offered by the Declaration of the South Atlantic as a Zone of Peace and Co-operation.

Our views coincided on important issues. We support the efforts for peace-building in southern Africa. We are concerned that, in spite of repeated appeals from this Assembly, negotiations have not yet begun on all aspects relating to the future of the Malvinas Islands. We believe it necessary that concrete measures be adopted, in particular by the militarily significant States, in order to ensure the non-introduction of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the reduction of foreign military presence in the Zone of Peace and Co-operation.

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Ample possibilities exist for joint action in favour of development. We found significant points of common interest in the preservation of the environment, in the need to avoid the dumping of toxic wastes and in the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I have no doubt that the conclusions of the Rio de Janeiro meeting will receive widespread support from States Members of the United Nations.

The signing of the Geneva agreements and the beginning of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan have rekindled hopes for a future of peace and development for that country. We commend the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, for the United Nations participation in this process. We would only have wished that the entering into force of the mechanism for verification and control of the agreements, with the good offices of the United Nations, had been implemented only after due process.

The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, welcomed by Brazil, brought the prospect of peace and economic reconstruction to the Gulf region. May I stress the extraordinary relevance of the United Nations in this initiative, as from the joint action of all members of the Security Council - over which Brazil had the honour to preside at that time - in consultation with the Governments of Iran and Iraq and with the constant, timely and balanced mediation of the Secretary-General.

In southern Africa, progress in the negotiations between Angola, South Africa and Cuba, with the mediation of the United States, augurs well for a peaceful and just solution to the question of Namibia under resolution 435 (1978), adopted 10 years ago by the Security Council. We hope that this will be the first step towards normalizing the situation in the southern part of the African continent

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through the elimination of all sources of tension and conflict. Brazil has underlined the need for strict respect for the territorial integrity of its South Atlantic neighbour, Angola, and for an immediate end to the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa.

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We regret that the odious practice of apartheid continues on its absurd course. The people and Government of Brazil long for the day when Namibia joins the community of independent nations. Peace and security can be assured in that region, so close to us, only when the odious institutionalized racism is eradicated.

In the Middle East repeated scenes of violence, which have shocked world public opinion, confirm that the self-determination of the Palestinian people in their own territory is an essential condition for solving the crisis. The Brazilian Government reiterates the need for respect for the rights of the Palestinian people, for Israel's complete withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967 and for all States of the region to be able to exist in peace within internationally recognized borders. With those goals in mind, we continue to support the holding of an international conference on the situation in the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The apparent standstill of peace progress in Central America is viewed with concern by Brazil. It cannot be denied that the Esquipulas Agreement contributed to alleviating tension and that new hopes emerged with the Sapoa Agreement. But the recurrence of incidents in areas of tension and the paralysis, which we hope is temporary, in the process of dialogue and understanding create a feeling of uncertainty as regards the future of Central America. As a member of the Contadora Support Group, Brazil hopes that a less tense international atmosphere may come to make it easier for the countries of the region to attain their objectives of peace and development.

Although there is progress on the political scene and signs of a future world free from war and truly committed to achieving lasting peace, the international economic situation still troubles our spirits and challenges our minds.

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In the great majority of developing countries Members of this Organization, the dire facts continue to cry out for creative decisions which might break the stalemate that has been keeping those countries on the verge of collapse. We must no longer delude one another with rhetorical phrases and concepts. It is high time we openly admitted that a strong uneasiness is corroding the foundations of international economic co-operation.

Almost half a century has elapsed since we declared ourselves United Nations and, united, undertook to follow a common set of ideals among which was the fight against misery and hunger. One commitment was to halt the degradation of the most cherished values of our civilizations, irrespective of origins or beliefs. What has happened to us? Have we become less united than we were then?

We have only to look at this Assembly, as we meet for the forty-third consecutive year, to see that we are nations sharing universal principles and ideals. Whereas the hostilities of the Second World War had plunged us into the most hidden depths of terror and desolation, the seeds sown in San Francisco bore fruit in the Americas, in Asia, in Africa and in the Middle East - throughout the world. They are here, united, the nations which 50 years ago found themselves on opposing sides of the battlefield. They are here in this very place, united, the nations which in the following years achieved their independence, which was to a great extent the fruit of the same seeds of democracy sown in San Francisco.

Are we less united than before? No. We are more united than before, but not as united as we wish to be in the future.

It is therefore sad to note that we American, Asian, African brothers still suffer from the same horrors and the same desolation that so badly afflicted our forbears. While we have done away with wars, we have not yet been able to banish hunger, which is spreading endemically in pockets throughout the continents. We

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are all the more ashamed to see that hunger is present in and close to the most plentiful societies man has ever known.

Something is terribly wrong. The real growth of production in developing countries fell from an annual average rate of 5.5 per cent in the 1970s to an average of less than 3 per cent in the 1980s. The share of developing countries in the developed market economies shrank from 28 per cent in 1980 to 19 per cent in 1987, whereas that of the developed countries grew from 63 per cent to 71 per cent in the same period. In real terms the participation of developing countries in world exports suffered a decrease of approximately 25 per cent between 1963 and 1986. And something is terribly wrong when one notes that, due to the burden of external debt, the developing countries are having to transfer abroad a great amount of the resources they so badly need for their economic development.

Brazil has, in the past few months, managed to reach with its private and government creditors a global agreement on the rescheduling of its external debt. We are therefore keenly aware of the burdens weighing down on our economy. That is why we are convinced that only if and when the developed countries adopt appropriate policies shall we be able to reduce interest rates and improve the outlook for trade in debtor nations.

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Unfortunately, the erratic policy on international interest rates in recent years has thwarted the economic development of a whole generation. This policy has turned international trade into a complementary source of the reserves needed simply to service the external debt, with obvious adverse effects on expanding or even maintaining our economies' capacity to import.

This sad state of affairs has been made all the worse by a battery of constraints imposed vertically - from top to bottom. Proposals clothed in euphemistic language, such as "voluntary export restraints", cannot disguise the old formulas of protectionism and the spoliation of trade partners, formulas which are always at the root of the most serious recessions to shake the international economy this century.

It is our hope that the present multilateral negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade will make it possible for international trade to enter into a new cycle of expansion, on a more just and balanced basis. We cannot accept that the concept of trade without frontiers should be invoked to deny third-world countries the special, differentiated treatment they should receive. Nor can we accept that the developed countries should ignore the commitments they solemnly made when the Uruguay Round was launched and demand concessions from developing countries in exchange for revoking protectionist measures.

Moreover, it must also be acknowledged that legislative initiatives in some of the main trading countries are in essence clearly hostile, not only to international trade, but even to the scientific and technological capacity of the developing countries. My country, for example, is now under the threat of trade retaliation, simply because we - in accordance with international law and with the letter and spirit of agreements to which we are parties - have encouraged, in our own territory, research into and development of pharmaceutical products. We were

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taken aback to see the most stable and predictable rules of international trade and international law being violated unilaterally.

Therefore, conditions seem ripe for the General Assembly, responding to the appeal the President made in his inaugural statement, to relaunch on an effective, realistic and constructive basis, without resorting to rhetoric or recrimination, the North-South dialogue, without forgetting the great frustrations this endeavour has entailed so far.

The General Assembly is meeting at a good moment to change the course of history; to steer it in safer directions; to intensify the progress made in the fields of peace, the settlement of disputes and disarmament; and to reappraise and reinvigorate the already weakened international economic co-operation.

This year we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is tragic that we are still unable to settle together the problems affecting, in vast areas of the world, the most elementary rights of mankind: the rights to life, health, shelter, food and work; in sum, those rights which assure the development and well-being of peoples.

Whereas in the task of building peace the day of hope is dawning upon the world, the struggle for development remains in frustrating darkness. It has been said that development is the new name for peace. If that is true, the Assembly cannot fail to measure up to the challenges of our times and to heed the urgent calls for justice and dignity.*

* The President returned to the Chair.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. RONALD REAGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Ronald Reagan, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President REAGAN: Half a world away from this place of peace, the firing, the killing, the bloodshed in two merciless conflicts have for the first time in recent memory diminished. After terrible new names, names such as Halabja, Maidan Shahr and Spin Buldak, have been added to the roll-call of human horror, there is today hope of peace in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

So, too, in the highlands and coastal cities of southern Africa, places of civil war, places of occupation by foreign troops, talk of peace is heard, peace for the tortured nation of Angola. Sixty-five hundred miles east, in the South-East Asian country of Cambodia, there is hope now of a settlement and the removal of Viet Nam's occupying forces. Finally, in this hemisphere, where only 12 years ago one third of the people of Latin America lived under democratic rule, some 90 per cent do so today. And especially in Central America, nations such as El Salvador, once threatened by the anarchy of the death squad and the spectre of totalitarian rule, now know the hope of self-government and the prospect of economic growth.

(President Reagan)

Another change, a change that if it endures may go down as one of the signal accomplishments of our history, a change that is cause for shaking the head in wonder, is also upon us; a change going to the source of post-war tensions and to the once seemingly impossible dream of ending the twin threats of our time - totalitarianism and thermonuclear world war.

For the first time, the differences between East and West - fundamental differences over important moral questions dealing with the worth of the individual and whether Governments shall control people or people control Governments - for the first time these differences have shown signs of easing, easing to the point where there are not just troop withdrawals from places such as Afghanistan, but also talk in the East of reform and greater freedom of the press, of assembly and of religion. Yes, fundamental differences remain, but should talk of reform become more than that, should it become reality, there is the prospect of not only a new era in Soviet-United States relations but a new age of world peace; for such reform can bring peace. History teaches, and my country has always believed that, where the rights of the individual and the people are enshrined, war is a distant prospect. For it is not people who make war; only Governments do that.

I stand at this rostrum, then, at a moment of hope; hope not just for the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union, but for all the peoples of the world, and hope too for the dream of peace among nations, the dream that began the United Nations. Precisely because of these changes, today the United Nations has the opportunity to live and breathe and work as never before.

Already, Mr. Secretary-General, you, through your persistence, patience and unyielding will, have shown in working towards peace in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf how valuable the United Nations can be. We salute you for these accomplishments.

(President Reagan)

In Geneva at this very hour there are numerous negotiations under way: multilateral negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament, as well as bilateral negotiations on a range of issues between the Soviets and ourselves. These negotiations, some of them under United Nations auspices, involve a broad arms-control agenda: strategic offensive weapons, strategic defence and space, nuclear testing, and chemical warfare - whose urgency we have witnessed anew in recent days.

And the negotiators are busy. Over the last few years they have been engaged in more than an academic exercise. There is movement; the log-jam is broken. Only recently, when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) agreement, an entire class of United States and Soviet nuclear missiles was eliminated for the first time in history. Progress continues on negotiations to reduce strategic weapons in massive number, with effective verification, and talks will begin soon on conventional reductions in Europe.

Much of the reason for all this goes back, I believe, to Geneva, to the small chateau beside the lake where I and the Soviet General Secretary had the first of several fireside chats - exchanges characterized by frankness, but friendliness too. I said at the first meeting in Geneva that this was a unique encounter between two people who had the power to start a third world war or to begin a new age of peace among nations. I also said that peace conferences, arms negotiations and proposals for treaties could make sense only if they were part of a wider context, a context in which we sought to explore and resolve the deeper underlying differences between us. I said to Mr. Gorbachev then, as I have said to the Assembly before, that nations do not mistrust each other because they are armed; they are armed because they mistrust each other.

(President Reagan)

In that place, by that peaceful lake in neutral Switzerland, Mr. Gorbachev and I did begin a new relationship based not just on engagement over the single issue of arms control but on a broader agenda about our deeper differences, an agenda of human rights, regional conflicts and bilateral exchanges between our peoples. Even on the arms-control issue itself we agreed to go beyond the past, to seek not just treaties that permitted building weapons to higher levels, but revolutionary agreements that actually reduced and even eliminated a whole class of nuclear weapons.

What was begun that morning in Geneva has shown results: in the INF Treaty; in my recent visit to Moscow; in my opportunity to meet there with Soviet citizens and dissidents and speak of human rights; and to speak too, in the Lenin Hills of Moscow, to the young people of the Soviet Union about the wonder and splendour of human freedom. The results of that morning in Geneva are seen in peace conferences now under way around the world on regional conflicts and in the work of the United Nations here in New York as well as in Geneva.

But history teaches caution. Indeed, that very building in Geneva, where important negotiations have taken place - those on the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq negotiations, for example - we see today as stone-like testimony to a failed dream of peace in another time. The Palais des Nations was the headquarters of the League of Nations, an institution that was to symbolize an end to all war. Yet that institution and its noble purpose ended with the Second World War; ended because the chance of peace was not seized in the 1930s by the nations of the world, ended because humanity did not find the courage to isolate the aggressors, to reject schemes of government that served the State, not the people.

(President Reagan)

We are here today determined that no such fate shall befall the United Nations. We are determined that the United Nations shall succeed and serve the cause of peace for humankind.

So we realize that, even in this time of hope, the chance of failure is real, but this knowledge does not discourage us: it spurs us on. For the stakes are high: Do we falter and fail now, and bring down upon ourselves the just anger of future generations? Or do we continue the work of the founders of this institution, and see to it that, at last, freedom is enshrined and humanity knows war no longer, and that this place, this floor, shall be truly "the world's last battlefield"?

We are determined that it shall be so. So we turn now to the agenda of peace. Let us begin by addressing a concern that was much on my mind when I met with Mr. Gorbachev in the Kremlin as well as on the minds of Soviet citizens I met in Moscow. It is also an issue that I know is of immediate importance to the members of this Assembly who, this fall, commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

That Declaration says plainly what those who seek peace can forget only at the greatest peril that peace rests on one foundation: observance of the "inalienable rights of all members of the human family". In a century where human rights have been denied by totalitarian governments on a scale never before seen in history, with so many millions deliberately starved or eliminated as a matter of State policy - a history, it has been said, of blood, stupidity and barbed wire - few can wonder why peace has proved so elusive.

Well, let us understand. If we would have peace, we must acknowledge the elementary rights of our fellow human beings, in our own land and in other lands. If we would have peace, the trampling of the human spirit must cease. Human rights

(President Reagan)

is not for some, some of the time. Human rights, as the Universal Declaration adopted by this Assembly in 1948 proclaims, is "for all peoples and all nations". And for all time.

This regard for human rights as the foundation of peace is at the heart of the United Nations. Those who starve in Ethiopia, those who die among the Kurds, those who face racial injustice in South Africa, those who still cannot write or speak freely in the Soviet Union, those who cannot worship in the Ukraine, those who struggle for life and freedom on boats in the South China Sea, those who cannot publish or assemble in Managua - all of these are more than just an item on your agenda. It must be a first concern, an issue above others. For when human rights concerns are not paramount at the United Nations - when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not honoured in these halls and meeting rooms - then the very credibility of this Organization is at stake, the very purpose of its existence in question.

That is why, when progress is made in human rights, the United Nations grows stronger and the United States is glad of it. For example, following a two-year effort led by the United States, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights took a major step towards ending the double standards and cynicism that had characterized too much of its past. For years, Cuba, a blatant violator of its citizens' human rights, has escaped United Nations censure or even scrutiny. This year, Cuba has responded to pressure generated by the Commission on Human Rights by accepting an investigation into its human rights abuses. Fidel Castro has already begun to free some political prisoners, improve prison conditions, and tolerate the existence of a small, independent national human rights group.

More must be done. The United Nations must be relentless and unyielding in seeking change, in Cuba and elsewhere. And we must also see to it that the

(President Reagan)

Universal Declaration itself is not debased with episodes like the resolution "Zionism is racism". Respect for human rights is the first and fundamental mission of this body, the most elementary obligation of its members. Indeed, wherever one turns in the world today, there is a new awareness, a growing passion for human rights. The people of the world become united: new groups, new coalitions form, coalitions that monitor government, that work against discrimination, that fight religious or political repression, unlawful imprisonment, torture or execution. As those I spoke to at Spaso House said to me last June: Such movements make a difference.

Turning now to regional conflicts, we feel again the uplift of hope. In the Gulf War between Iran and Iraq - one of the bloodiest conflicts since the Second World War - we have a cease-fire. The resolution and the firmness of the allied nations in keeping the Persian Gulf open to international shipping not only upheld the rule of law, it helped prevent further spread of the conflict and laid the basis for peace. So, too, the Security Council's decisive resolution in July a year ago has become the blueprint for a peaceful Gulf. Let this war - a war in which there has been no victor or vanquished, only victims - let this war end now. Let both Iran and Iraq co-operate with the Secretary-General and the Security Council in implementing resolution 598 (1978). Let peace come.

Moving on to a second region, I would recall that when I first addressed the United Nations General Assembly in 1983, world attention was focused on the brutal invasion and illegal occupation of Afghanistan. After nearly nine long years of war, the courage and determination of the Afghan people and the Afghan freedom fighters have held sway - and today, an end to the occupation is in sight. On April 14, the USSR signed the Geneva Accords, which were negotiated under United Nations auspices by Pakistan and the Kabul régime. We encourage the Soviet Union

(President Reagan)

to complete its troop withdrawal at the earliest possible date, so that the Afghan people can freely determine their future without further outside interference.

In southern Africa, too, years of patient diplomacy and support for those in Angola who seek self-determination are having their effect. We look forward to an accord between the Governments of Angola, Cuba, and South Africa that will bring about a complete withdrawal of all foreign troops - primarily Cuban - from Angola. We look forward as well to full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and our longstanding goal of independence for Namibia. We continue to support a growing consensus among African leaders who also believe there can be no end to conflict in the region until there is national reconciliation within Angola.

There are new hopes for Cambodia, a nation whose freedom and independence we seek just as avidly as we sought the freedom and independence of Afghanistan. We urge the rapid removal of all Vietnamese troops and a settlement that will prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge to power, permitting instead the establishment of a genuinely representative government - a government that will, at last, respect fully the rights of the people of Cambodia and end the hideous suffering they have so bravely and needlessly borne.

In other critical areas, we applaud the Secretary-General's efforts to structure a referendum on the Western Sahara. In the Mediterranean, direct talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities hold much promise for accord in that divided island nation. Finally, we look to a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. So, too, the unnatural division of Europe remains a critical obstacle to Soviet-American relations.

(President Reagan)

In most of these areas, then, we see progress and, again, we are glad of it. Only a few years ago, all of these and other conflicts were burning dangerously out of control. Indeed, the invasion of Afghanistan and the apparent failure of will among democratic and peace-loving nations to deter such events seemed to cause a climate where aggression by nations large and small was epidemic, a climate the world had not seen since the 1930s. Only this time, larger war was avoided - avoided because the free and peaceful nations of the world recovered their strength of purpose and will. And now the United Nations is providing valuable assistance in helping this epidemic to recede.

And because we are resolved to keep it so, I would be remiss in my duty if I did not now take note here of the one exception to progress in regional conflicts. I refer here to the continuing deterioration of human rights in Nicaragua and the refusal of the tiny élite now ruling that nation to honour promises of democracy made to their own people and to the international community. This élite - in calling itself revolutionary - seeks no real revolution; the use of the term is subterfuge, deception for hiding the oldest, most corrupt vice of all: man's age-old will to power, his lust to control the lives and steal the freedom of others.

That is why, as President, I will continue to urge the Congress and the American public to stand behind those who resist this attempt to impose a totalitarian régime on the people of Nicaragua; that the United States will continue to stand with those who are threatened by this régime's aggression against its neighbours in Central America.

Today, I also call on the Soviet Union to show in Central America the same spirit of constructive realism it has shown in other regional conflicts; to assist in bringing conflict in Central America to a close by halting the flow of billions

(President Reagan)

of dollars worth of arms and ammunition to the Sandinista régime, a régime whose goals of regional domination, while ultimately doomed, can continue to cause great suffering to the people of that area and risk to Soviet-American relations unless action is taken now.

With regard to the arms reduction agenda, I have already mentioned the importance of the INF Treaty and the momentum developed in the strategic arms reduction talks (START). The draft START treaty is a lengthy document filled with bracketed language designating sections of disagreement between the two sides. But through this summer in Geneva, those brackets have diminished; there is every reason to believe this process can continue. I can tell this Assembly that it is highly doubtful such a treaty can be accomplished in a few months, but I can tell you that a year from now is a possibility - more than a possibility. But we have no deadline. No agreement is better than a bad agreement. The United States remains hopeful, and we acknowledge the spirit of co-operation shown by the Soviet Union in these negotiations. We also look for that spirit to be applied to our concerns about compliance with existing agreements.

So, too, our discussions on nuclear testing and defence and space have been useful. But let me here stress to the General Assembly that much of the momentum in nuclear-arms-control negotiations is due to technological progress itself, especially in the potential for space-based defensive systems. I believe that the determination of the United States to research and develop and, when ready, deploy such defensive systems - systems targeted to destroy missiles, not people - accounts for a large share of the progress made in recent years in Geneva. With such systems, for the first time, in case of accidental launch or the act of a madman somewhere, major Powers will not be faced with the single option of massive retaliation, but will instead have the chance of a saner choice: to shield against

(President Reagan)

an attack instead of avenging it. So, too, as defensive systems grow in effectiveness, they reduce the threat and the value of greater and greater offensive arsenals. Only recently, briefings I have received in the Oval Office indicate that progress toward such systems may be even more rapid and less costly than we had at first thought. Today, the United States reaffirms its commitment to its strategic defense initiative and our offer to share the benefits of strategic defences with others.

And yet, even as diplomatic and technological progress holds out the hope of at last diminishing the awful cloud of nuclear terror we have lived under in the post-war era, even at this moment another ominous terror is loose once again in the world, a terror we thought the world had put behind, a terror that looms at us now from the long-buried past, from ghostly, scarring trenches and the haunting, wan faces of millions dead in one of the most inhumane conflicts of all time.

Poison gas; chemical warfare: the terror of it; the horror of it! We condemn it. The use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war, beyond its tragic human toll, jeopardizes the moral and legal strictures that have held those weapons in check since the First World War. Let this tragedy spark reaffirmation of the Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of chemical weapons. I call upon the signatories to that Protocol, as well as other concerned States, to convene a conference to consider actions that we can take together to reverse the serious erosion of this treaty. We urge all nations to co-operate in negotiating a verifiable, truly global ban on chemical weapons at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

It is incumbent upon all civilized nations to ban, once and for all - and on a verifiable and global basis - the use of chemical and gas warfare.

Finally, we must redouble our efforts to stop further proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world. Likewise, proliferation in other high-technology weapons

(President Reagan)

such as ballistic missiles, is reaching global proportions, exacerbating regional rivalries in ways that can have global implications. The number of potential suppliers is growing at an alarming rate, and more must be done to halt the spread of these weapons. This was a matter of discussion last week between Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. Talks between American and Soviet experts begin on this today; and we hope to see a multilateral effort to avoid having areas of tension like the Middle East becoming even more deadly battlegrounds than they already are.

But in most of these areas we see not only progress but also the potential for an increasingly vital role for multilateral efforts and institutions like the United Nations. That is why now more than ever the United Nations must continue to increase its effectiveness through budget and programme reform. The United Nations already is enacting sweeping measures affecting personnel reductions, budgeting by consensus, and the establishment of programme priorities. These actions are extremely important. The progress on reforms has allowed me to release funds withheld under congressional restrictions. I expect that the reform programme will continue and that further funds will be released in our new fiscal year.

Let me say here that we congratulate the United Nations on the work it has done in three areas of special concern. First, our struggle against the scourge of terrorism and State-sponsored terrorism must continue; and we must also end the scourge of hostage-taking. Second, the work of the World Health Organization in co-ordinating and advancing research on AIDS is vital. All international efforts in this area must be redoubled. The AIDS crisis is a grave one; we must move as one to meet it.

(President Reagan)

So, too, is the drug crisis. We are moving now toward a new anti-drug-trafficking convention. This important treaty will be completed in December. I am confident that other strong United Nations drug-control programmes will also follow. The American people are profoundly concerned and deeply angered. We will not tolerate the drug traffickers. We mean to make war on them - and we believe this is one war the United Nations can endorse and participate in.

(President Reagan)

Yes, the United Nations is a better place than it was eight years ago - and so, too, is the world. But the real issue of reform in the United Nations is not limited to fiscal and administrative improvements; it includes also a higher sort of reform, an intellectual and philosophical reform, a reform of old views about the relationship between the individual and the State.

Few developments, for example, have been more encouraging to the United States than the special session on Africa that this body held two and a half years ago - a session at which the Members of the United Nations joined in calling as one for free-market incentives and a lessening of State controls to spur economic development.

At one of the first international assemblies of my presidency, in Cancun, Mexico, I said that history demonstrates that, time and again, in place after place, economic growth and human progress make their greatest strides in countries that encourage economic freedom; that individual farmers, labourers, owners, traders and managers are the heart and soul of development. Trust them, because where they are allowed to create and build, where they are given a personal stake in deciding economic policies and benefiting from their success, societies become more dynamic, prosperous, progressive and free. We believe in freedom; we know that it works.

This is the immutable lesson of the post-war era: that freedom works; that, even more, freedom and peace work together. Every year that passes, everywhere in the world, this lesson is taking hold - from the People's Republic of China to Cameroon, from Bolivia to Botswana, and, yes, in the citadel of Marxism-Leninism itself. No, my country did not invent this synergy of peace and freedom, but, believe me, we impose no restrictions on the free export of our more than two centuries of experience with it. Free people, blessed by economic opportunity and protected by laws that respect the dignity of the individual, are not driven towards

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war or the domination of others. Here, then, is the way to world peace. But we Americans champion freedom not only because it is practical and beneficial but because it is also just, morally right.

Here I should like to note that I have addressed this assemblage more often than any of my predecessors and that this is the last occasion on which I shall do so. Therefore I hope that I may be permitted some closing reflections.

The world is currently witnessing another celebration of international co-operation. At the Olympics we see nations joining together in the competition of sports, and we see young people, who know precious little of the resentments of their elders, coming together as one.

One of our young athletes, from a home of modest means, said that she drew the strength for her achievement from another source of wealth. "We were rich as a family" she said about the love she was given and the values she was taught. I dare to hope that in the sentiment of that young athlete we see a sign of the rediscovery of old and tested values: values such as family - the first and most important unit of society, where all values and learning begin, an institution to be cherished and protected; values, too, such as work, community, freedom and faith, for it is here we find the deeper rationale for the cause of human rights and world peace.

Our own experience on this continent, the American experience, though brief, has had one unmistakable encounter, an insistence on the preservation of one sacred truth: it is a truth that our first President, our founding father, passed on in the first farewell address made to the American people; it is a truth that I hope you will permit me to mention in these remarks of farewell, a truth embodied in our Declaration of Independence: that the case for inalienable rights, the idea of human dignity, the notion of conscience above compulsion, can be made only in the

(President Reagan)

context of higher law, only in the context of what one of the founders of this Organization, Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, called "devotion to something which is greater and higher than we are ourselves."

This is the endless cycle, the final truth to which humankind seems always to return - that religion and morality, faith in something higher, are prerequisites for freedom, and that justice and peace within ourselves is the first step toward justice and peace in the world and for the ages.

Yes, this is a place of great debate and grave discussion. Yet I cannot help but note here that one of our founding fathers - the most worldly of men, an internationalist, Benjamin Franklin - interrupted the proceedings of our own constitutional convention to make much the same point.

I cannot help but think this morning of other beginnings - of where and when I first read those words "and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares" and "your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams". This morning, my thoughts go to her who gave me many things in life but whose most important gift was the knowledge of the happiness and solace to be gained in prayer. It is the greatest help I have had in my presidency, and I recall here Lincoln's words when he said

"Only the most foolish of men would think he could confront the duties of the office I now hold without turning to someone stronger, a power above all others."

I think, then, of her and others like her in that small town in Illinois, gentle people who possessed something that those who hold positions of power sometimes forget to prize. No one of them could ever have imagined that the boy from the banks of the Rock River would come to this moment and have this opportunity. But, had they been told that it would happen, I think they would have

(President Reagan)

been a bit disappointed if I had not spoken here for what they knew so well: that when we grow weary of the world and its troubles, when our faith in humanity falters, it is then that we must seek comfort and refreshment of spirit in a deeper source of wisdom, one greater than ourselves.

So, if future generations do say of us that in our time peace came closer, that we did bring about new seasons of truth and justice, it will be cause for pride. But it will be a cause of greater pride still if it is also said that we were wise enough to know that the deliberations of great leaders and great bodies are but an overture, that the truly majestic music, the music of freedom, justice and peace, is the music made in forgetting self and seeking in silence the will of Him who made us.

Thank you for your hospitality over the years. I bid you now farewell, and God bless you.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ASAMOAH (Ghana): I wish to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on behalf of the people and Government of Ghana and on my own behalf on your election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I have every confidence that the vastness of your experience and the accomplished diplomatic skills that you bring to that high office will contribute significantly to the General Assembly's work at this session.

May I also pay a well-deserved tribute to your immediate predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, for his superb handling of the last session.

The common experience of developing countries since the General Assembly met a year ago has undoubtedly been the difficulty in dealing with the range of very grave economic problems that continue to affect them. The economic crisis, which is about a decade old in the developing world, is still with us. The gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to widen. For the vast majority of mankind the vision of a world of greater social justice and a better standard of living remains illusory. In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the economic crisis has assumed alarming proportions. Despite the adoption of structural reform policies by most African countries, the subcontinent continues to suffer from the combined effects of, among other things, the sharp fall in the prices of commodities, the dramatic fluctuations in currency exchange rates and crippling debt obligations.

In the last five years the critical economic situation in Africa has occupied a position of high priority on the international economic agenda, culminating in 1986 in the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. That Programme outlined the policy measures which should be pursued at various levels in order to halt Africa's economic decline and put the continent back on the path of economic growth. Halfway through the term of the

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Programme, however, Africa's economic performance has shown no significant improvement.

Since the adoption of the Programme the majority of African countries, in fulfilment of their commitments, have been engaged in resolutely implementing credible structural adjustment and economic reform programmes. Many more African countries may follow. But what incentives do those still weighing the question have in the face of the inadequate support that the pioneers have received? It should be possible to assure countries such as mine which are struggling with the task of implementing structural adjustment programmes that their efforts will not be in vain and that adequate and timely support will be forthcoming.

The mid-term review and appraisal exercise undertaken a few days ago by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly has afforded us a welcome opportunity to examine critically the implementation of the mutual commitments assumed by the African countries and the international community. The shortcomings and constraints have been identified and the General Assembly should decide during this session on the measures, policies and initiatives for overcoming them.

It is therefore pertinent to emphasize three separate but interrelated questions, because, in my delegation's view, they are fundamental and must be addressed squarely. I am referring here to the low commodity prices, the serious debt-servicing problems and the inadequate flow of development finance.

Africa would very much wish to be in a position to provide the bulk of the resources needed to finance its development through the returns on its own efforts. But how can it realize this aspiration when prices of primary commodities of interest to Africa remain depressed? In the various structural adjustment programmes, rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure and incentives to farmers have absorbed a large part of the investment, and it is discouraging that, when these efforts succeed in raising output, the returns are not enough even to cover

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the cost of investment. At present, Africa loses billions of dollars every year on account of low commodity prices. Development and investment have suffered thereby and our debt-servicing capacity has been seriously undermined. In a marketplace where one group of operators is continually selling its wares cheaply and buying those of others dearly, protection needs to be given to the weak and vulnerable operators until such time as they are in a position to deal at arms length with the strong ones. This has been done even in the so-called free market economies. The present situation of the African countries in the commodities trade calls for this approach and we note that it is part of the purpose of the Common Fund for Commodities to give such protection to producers of commodities. Apart from the economic provisions for stabilizing commodity prices, provision is also made to enable producing countries to diversify their production. The Common Fund Agreement has at last met all the requirements for entry into force and presents us with a unique opportunity to eschew lip-service and ideological rigidity in favour of pragmatic and sincere efforts to remove one of the severe constraints on Africa's economic development. We call earnestly on all those countries which have not yet ratified the Agreement to do so.

The second fundamental question is the external indebtedness of African countries and the serious debt-servicing problems faced by most of them. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in a recent survey, concludes that the external debt position of sub-Saharan Africa has worsened considerably. It is an indication that the strategy for solving the problem has not worked, because frequent rescheduling has only postponed current obligations and added to the debt obligations of some African countries. We are pleased that some of these debts have been converted into grants. We also greatly appreciate the initiatives pertaining to the debt of the poorer countries undertaken by the recent Toronto summit. But, as we have constantly argued, it is only through a strategy that

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leads to significant reductions in debt stock as well as rescheduling of any residual debt over longer periods that the severe hardship imposed by debt-servicing burdens will be brought to an end.

A way will have to be found to deal with the debt owed to the international financial institutions, which, as a matter of policy, do not like to reschedule. As of now, five African countries have been declared ineligible for the use of IMF resources because of their arrears to the Fund. This is a serious development and if debt relief does not come in time many other African countries may find themselves in a similar situation. A number of proposals have been made in an attempt to find an acceptable solution to this problem. The Advisory Group on Financial Flows to Africa established by the Secretary-General has suggested refinancing of sub-Saharan countries' obligations. These proposals deserve serious attention in view of the prospect of mounting indebtedness disrupting relations between African countries and the Fund.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

The third fundamental question relates to the inadequate flow of development finance to the African countries. Although the international community has made a commitment to relieve the resource constraints of African countries, resource flows to Africa have in recent years suffered a decrease. More importantly, official development assistance, which constitutes a significant component of financial flows to Africa, showed a decline in real terms in 1987 - a fact over which the Secretary-General was moved to express disappointment in his address to the Economic and Social Council during its second session in Geneva this year.

It is a matter of grave concern that at a time when many African countries are making determined efforts to implement structural adjustment programmes their efforts should be undercut by crippling financial constraints. The upshot has been the adoption of adjustment programmes in which demand management has been emphasized, even though it is generally accepted that adjustment with growth is the best route to economic recovery and development. Expenditure reduction measures, such as cost recovery and retrenchment of labour, have created serious strains in African societies, threatening the sustainability of the economic reform programmes.

My delegation recognizes, of course, that the international community, including the international financial institutions, has adopted some measures and taken certain initiatives in support of Africa's efforts. Those measures and initiatives have been belated and inadequate. Together they do not constitute a coherent and integrated programme that could seriously tackle the monumental development challenge facing Africa. As we take stock of our performance, let us boldly address the fundamental questions that have for so long bedevilled the economic development of Africa; and let us resolve to translate our commitments into concrete action.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

The General Assembly has convened this year against a background of some financial uncertainty, even though there are some prospects for better times ahead. It would be unfortunate for the United Nations to be financially handicapped at a time when it finds itself actively engaged in urgent peace-keeping efforts in the Gulf and Afghanistan, with prospects for similar services in other areas of conflict. The administrative measures agreed upon in 1987 have either been implemented or are on course. We hope therefore that the withholding of funds by Member States will become a thing of the past. Financial obligations under the Charter are no different from other treaty obligations and they should be discharged without pre-conditions.

As far as the political scene is concerned, Ghana welcomes the current wave of peace sweeping the globe. Conflicts which but a few months ago seemed intractable are now being resolved at the negotiating table.

The happy turn of events in the Iran-Iraq conflict comes as a relief to the entire world. The eight years of conflict, entailing unspeakable loss of human lives, cannot be justified. The cessation of hostilities is thus welcome. Ghana applauds the Secretary-General for the prompt steps he has taken to initiate the implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We urge Iran and Iraq to extend maximum co-operation to the Secretary-General at this critical period of returning the war-weary region to peace and normalcy. Both parties must however realize that lasting peace can be built only on foundations of equity and justice.

Ghana equally welcomes the prospects for peace in Angola and Namibia. The denial of peace to the people of Angola since that country achieved independence 13 years ago cannot be justified on any grounds. The Angolan experience is a classic example of the consequences of unwarranted external interference in the

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internal affairs of a State Member of the United Nations. Similarly, the unsettled question of Namibian independence has seriously threatened the credibility of our Organization. Now that South Africa appears to appreciate the futility of policies of colonization, destabilization and aggression, Ghana would like to believe that there will be no turning back.

Bearing in mind South Africa's vacillations and prevarications in the past, we must naturally remain sceptical. We recall that the present moves are similar to those of four years ago, when the Lusaka agreement was to have led to a cease-fire, a South African disengagement and the establishment of a joint monitoring commission. By the end of that year, however, not only had the Lusaka agreement collapsed but also South African troops had mounted a large-scale invasion of Angola. We also recall the insincerity of the Botha régime in relation to the implementation of the Nkomati Accord.

It is important that the international community should not adopt a complacent attitude towards the southern African situation. The truth of the matter is that the apartheid régime has not only intensified repression of its people but also introduced Draconian laws to stifle the expression of dissent. The banning since last November of all political activities by organizations committed to non-violence and the arrest of peaceful marchers, including clergymen, show that the apartheid régime is not interested in any meaningful reform. South Africa shows every indication of maintaining the apartheid system, and that means the likelihood of more aggression against the front-line States. The international community must take such measures as are necessary to eradicate the apartheid system, to deny the South Africans the capability of aggression and to strengthen the front-line States to withstand South African aggression.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

It is within the power of South Africa to live in peace with its neighbours and to become a respectable member of the international community by taking appropriate steps to eradicate totally its apartheid system. Among the steps that need to be taken, the Botha régime should release Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners forthwith and initiate talks with the black leadership with a view to sharing power democratically with all South Africans, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Ghana believes that until that is done a further tightening of sanctions is necessary to ensure the total isolation and collapse of the South African régime.

Another outstanding regional conflict in Africa which also cries out for a solution is the one over the Western Sahara. We urge all parties to co-operate with the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the settlement of the conflict and an unimpeded realization of the self-determination of the Saharoui people.

Hopes for peace have also been raised in Afghanistan and Kampuchea, and we are grateful to all those who continue to seek peace in those countries. Ghana welcomes the Geneva accords and the commencement of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. We are especially appreciative of the bold decision of the Soviet Union to withdraw from that country. We urge all parties concerned to co-operate for the successful implementation of the measures being promoted within the context of the United Nations Good Offices Mission for Afghanistan and Pakistan to help the Afghan refugees to return and to participate in the reconstruction of their country.

The recent exploratory talks in Indonesia between the parties to the Kampuchean conflict also constitute a welcome development. We believe that by building upon that foundation the parties to the conflict could narrow their differences and perhaps reach agreement. The people of Kampuchea yearn for peace

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and their wish must be fulfilled with the active support of the international community, but in the final analysis peace is possible only if the parties to the conflict summon the political courage to resolve their differences.

Hopes of peace in the Middle East continue to fade with each passing day. That is largely due to the imperviousness of the Israeli Government to the wind of change that is sweeping the world. The intractable problem of the occupied Palestinian lands has taken a turn for the worse.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

The uprising which started in December 1987 is still raging with the Palestinian death toll mounting every single day. The real tragedy is that Israel continues to regard the uprising as simply a matter of law and order and has therefore resorted to an "iron-fist" policy to deal with the situation instead of recognizing that the uprising is a legitimate outburst of accumulated Palestinian grievances. We urge the Israeli authorities to face issues and to place a higher premium on human life, good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence with their neighbours and the rest of the international community.

It is the view of Ghana that the General Assembly should renew its call for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East. All parties concerned should be allowed to participate in the conference without any pre-conditions.

The situation in Central America also continues to be a matter of concern. The hopes that we cherished last year for the subregion have been dashed by the breakdown in the implementation of the Central American peace accord thanks to the intransigence of the contras. Every effort must be made to revive the peace process without undue external pressure or interference. External pressures motivated by ideological considerations in our view undermine the peace process. The General Assembly should appeal once again to all parties concerned to strive to achieve a political settlement and to abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Another area in which political tension threatens to be permanent is Korea. The continued division of that country and the disagreements between the north and south do not advance the interests of Koreans. Ghana is glad to note the resumption of contacts and talks between the two parts of the country and hopes that even though no concrete advantage has as yet accrued, the dialogue will be

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maintained and intensified with a view to attaining the reunification of the country. The Korean people should be left free to determine their future without external pressure or influence.

The ever-escalating arms race remains a major threat to the survival of mankind. There can be no moral justification for current levels of expenditure on arms while the vast majority of mankind lacks basic necessities. It was against this background that we had hoped that the fifteenth special session of the United Nations, the third special session devoted to disarmament, held last spring, would provide an opportunity to adopt a programme of action that could give further momentum to the disarmament process. Regrettably, that special session failed, in spite of the propitious international climate provided by the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the USSR on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (the INF Treaty).

The special session did however provide the opportunity for various new proposals to be advocated, particularly those presented by the 120 non-governmental organizations which participated in it. These proposals should be examined for possible adoption. The Ghana delegation would be willing to work with any delegation that might wish to study and formulate those proposals into resolutions for the consideration of the General Assembly.

Although we continue to attach the greatest urgency to nuclear disarmament we also believe conventional disarmament deserves no less attention. The extravagant purchases of weapons in recent years clearly show that the international community should not relinquish its efforts to sensitize public opinion about the urgency of disarmament in all its aspects. But that must go hand in hand with a similar effort for social, economic and political justice for all nations.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

Let us hope that the co-operation that is developing between the super-Powers will aim at justice for all nations and peoples, particularly those nations and peoples that have been the victims of arbitrary power and insensitivity for centuries. The small nations will have no choice but to fight against any attempt to impose on them a vision of the world that ignores their essential pre-occupations.

In conclusion, my delegation renews its appeal to all Member States to put their minds and resources together in support of the principles and objectives of the Organization. The United Nations may not be perfect but it still is, and will continue for a long time to be, an indispensable instrument of peaceful coexistence.

Mr. GONZALES POSADA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, the delegation of Peru welcomes your election to preside over the present session of the General Assembly where countries of the north and south, the east and west will set forth their vision of a world still beset by war, conflict, injustice, inequality and the disgraceful racial discrimination of apartheid.

We feel that we have a share in the responsibility assumed by our region in your person. We are confident that your presidency is inspired by the ideals of freedom, independence, development and peace that bind together the kindred peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

I am addressing the General Assembly in my capacity as Minister of Foreign Relations of Peru. I represent a country of ancient civilizations and cultures, a country which today on the eve of the twenty-first century has more than 20 million inhabitants, 40 per cent of its population being under 15 years of age, and a country stubbornly striving to uphold its independence and attain its development.

For us, being Peruvian means being a Latin American and that constitutes an inescapable commitment to affirm our standing as citizens of a continental homeland, or, as our liberator Simon Bolivar said, a nation of republics.

(Mr. Gonzales Posada, Peru)

Because of the Latin American commitment to the Peruvian people and because of the alarming features of the economic and social crisis that affects our region, it is imperative for me to focus my statement on the challenges posed for Latin Americans by the problems of the present and the promise and challenges of the future. As the representative of a nation struggling against inflation, the foremost enemy of our people, through a severe economic programme of austerity with social implications, the situation of my country is not unrelated to the drama being experienced by the continental people of Latin America where economic and financial difficulties are aggravating our social problems and demanding a united, innovative and coherent answer.

We Latin Americans have an historical awareness that only by being united can we advance towards resolving our economic and social problems. By being divided we will only manage to perpetuate and deepen those problems and we should be allowing a dangerous expansion of the distance separating us from the industrialized world at a time when other geographical areas in the process of development are stepping up their rate of progress.

Latin America is in a state of crisis. We must say so plainly and we must point out to the international community some indicators which, like an X-ray, clearly indicate its magnitude.*

* Mr. Rana (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Gonzales Posada, Peru)

One indicator is the volume and structure of an irrational external debt that burdens us with payments that are impossible to meet, drastically limiting the mobilization of resources to take care of the most pressing social needs and hindering the flow of external investments and resources required for development.

We Latin Americans owe \$420 billion, representing 45 per cent of the region's gross regional product and whose servicing absorbs nearly 40 per cent of our total export earnings.

In 1982, at the beginning of the crisis, the regional debt amounted to 2.7 times the total exports; that ratio has now increased to 3.5 times and the trend for future years is upward. Moreover, from 1982 to 1987, owing to debt payments Latin America transferred \$190 billion to the developed world, while receiving \$40 billion in new inputs - a shortfall of \$150 billion.

That is most alarming, for the region is dramatically losing its financial resources and our countries are being transformed from capital recipients to net capital exporters to the developed world, thus depriving us of vital resources for social and development programmes whose non-implementation exacerbates the poverty of our peoples and endangers their very survival.

In addition, our share in world trade has declined to 4 per cent and the terms of trade have deteriorated by 14.5 per cent. Had this deterioration not occurred, Latin America would have had additional income in the order of \$70 billion over the last eight years.

An equally serious aspect of the situation is the investment and financing attracted by the region during the same period. Domestic savings geared to investment in the region diminished from 24 per cent to 15 per cent of the gross domestic product, largely because that money went to paying the external debt; at the same time, external investment also declined, from 12 per cent at the beginning of the decade to 4.6 per cent in 1986.

(Mr. Gonzales Posada, Peru)

Formerly, in the context of the developing world, Latin America received 70 per cent of world investment; today that figure has been reduced to 17.5 per cent, largely because the impossibility of paying the debt on the terms imposed on us has discouraged capital investment in the region.

Those are the realities of the crisis besetting us, as is the fact that our imports and exports have declined to historically unprecedented levels, pointing to an alarmingly regressive situation in circumstances where the Latin American population is constantly growing and thus creating corresponding economic and social needs.

What can we do, given this harsh reality? What can we do to ensure that Latin America can emerge from a crisis that threatens to become chronic?

In the first place, it is imperative that we become aware of the magnitude of the tragic situation and that we Latin Americans assume a commitment to unite not just in a rhetorical repetition or reiterated announcement of the problems but in concerted efforts in laying out joint strategies enabling us to renegotiate the external debt on acceptable and realistic terms, and leading our creditors to understand that the debt cannot be retired on the terms originally contracted.

Secondly, we believe that the time has come for Latin American States definitively to integrate.

Latin American integration can no longer be a long-term project or aspiration. It has become an imperative of the present, an urgent need, an indispensable option to modernize our productive structures in order to bring about a broader market that will endow our exports with greater competitiveness and enable us to receive investments and financing on realistic terms without detriment to our sovereign decisions.

Integration thus understood will clearly give the region multinational negotiating power and strength enabling it to present a solid front in

(Mr. Gonzales Posada, Peru)

international economic and trade negotiations and to resist and reverse the protectionist measures of the developed world.

Latin American integration - the key to development, the unrealized dream of our liberators and the unfulfilled commitment to our peoples - has been limping upstairs on crutches while in the developed world integration has gone up by the elevator, thus broadening the gap separating us from the North and painfully losing us resources and opportunities vital to regional development.

Hence our peoples cry out with good reason for action, responsibility, dynamism, resolve and concerted effort.

There is no time to waste in Latin America. There is no room for apathy, bureaucratization and insensitivity, because 700,000 children in our continent are dying of hunger every year; because more than 110 million Latin Americans are living in poverty, and of these 35 million find themselves in that subhuman situation described as extreme poverty; because the children of 40 per cent of Latin American homes do not have adequate nutrition; because 78 per cent of them are living in unhealthy surroundings; because the absolutely unemployed, which in 1980 numbered 25 million, now number 40 million and may be growing as a result of recession; because the underemployed also number 40 million; because 60 per cent of the economically active population does not have social security coverage and because per capita income has declined by 10 per cent.

As if all that were not enough, hunger and poverty are also creating conditions making children the targets of war, political violence or terrorism, as is shown dramatically by the fact that from 1982 to date more than 300,000 children have been displaced from their homes and thousands more have died or been injured as a result of these destructive tendencies. Terrorism, a pathological and extreme form of violence which holds life and democracy in contempt and makes crime an aberrant style of politics, has also emerged in Latin America and deserves our most

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vigorous condemnation and our commitment to fight it with firmness, but within the framework of the law, because only thus will we be affirming the humanistic and democratic structures we want for our societies.

Latin America must also face the serious and disturbing phenomenon of drug trafficking, which is a crime against humanity, distorts our economy, erodes the moral foundations of social coexistence and seeks to set itself up as a new focus of power, threatening the security of States and of society.

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Since the decade of the 1970s, when the consumers' market for cocaine and other drugs grew tenfold in some industrialized countries, international drug-trafficking cartels have taken shape, and there are now more than 50 million addicts throughout the world.

Because of the magnitude of drug trafficking, which acts like a multinational and annually mobilizes some \$400 billion, it is impossible to defeat it with isolated or partial strategies. It must be attacked frontally in every aspect through a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration the relationships between consumption, production, transportation, illicit trading and financing, which feed and perpetuate the economic cycle of drugs.

Peru is affected by this plague, and it is committed to the struggle. Therefore, in the Andean Group, in the Organization of American States, in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the wider forum of the United Nations, we promote the co-ordination of policies and actions designed to establish effective international standards which should make it possible without delay to bring about crop substitution in the framework of an integrated development programme, a drastic reduction in consumption, the seizure of property and currency produced by drug trafficking, the unification of our legislations in giving decisive impetus to prevention and rehabilitation, and the enhancement of unconditional international financial co-operation to assist countries affected by illicit production.

The draft convention being negotiated in the United Nations should quickly lead to the approval of an effective international legal instrument. That can be achieved only through a balanced convention that attacks consumption, trafficking, transportation, production and illicit financing equally, and is based on full respect for the sovereignty and international jurisdiction of States.

We shall persist in the struggle against drug trafficking because that struggle represents a moral commitment to all the peoples of the world, especially

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the children and young persons affected by this plague. The President of Peru, Alan Garcia, has repeatedly called for such a commitment and has emphasized that there is no time to lose and no effort must be spared in this battle for morality and for life itself.

I shall now refer to some of the priority items on the international agenda.

There have been significant advances in resolving principal areas of conflict, such as the cases of Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Western Sahara and Namibia, which have been set on a path that augurs well for peace. The processes of détente and rationality are long-term processes that uphold life over death, and peace over war, and they are promoted with talent and vigour by the Secretary-General, a distinguished son of Peru whom we salute with legitimate pride. It is important that those processes bear fruit, and that new areas of negotiation are opened up for other regions in which there is conflict, such as Central America, a part of Latin America in which it is indispensable to fulfil the agreements of Esquipulas II and to affirm international law and the rule of law, under which non-intervention and non-use of force should guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the peoples. All of this is necessary to culminate a long process of negotiation in which Peruvian diplomacy has taken part and continues actively to participate through the Contadora Group and the Support Group.

Similarly, it is urgent for disarmament agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union to be deepened until they remove the nuclear threat from the face of the earth. Otherwise those agreements already achieved will have little practical effect, for real progress cannot be seen in merely moving from the destructive capacity to destroy the earth 100 times to the destructive capacity to destroy it 80 times.

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Disarmament is a synonym for détente and brotherhood. In economic terms, it implies releasing resources used for destruction and death for purposes of construction and life. Therefore the Latin American and non-aligned concept of using the funds thus released to establish a fund, under United Nations administration, to counter poverty and hunger retains its relevance.*

Those of us who call for the democratization of international relations, those of us who struggle for a process of peace, détente and non-violence, are thus expressing the sentiments of our peoples, which cry out for life and social justice. Peru firmly and stubbornly believes in democracy and civil liberties, and that the State should be based on the rule of law. Those are enduring principles that govern our national life.

In this forum Peru holds out its hand to all peoples and reiterates its faith in the United Nations, and it expresses the hope that the results of this session of the Assembly will meet the aspirations of all who proclaim faith in the brotherhood of man and the common destiny of all who share this still torn and troubled world.

The eyes of the world's poor are upon us, in anxious hope. All who hold peace and humanity dear await our decisions. Let us not disappoint them.

Mr. SORSA (Finland): At the outset I should like to convey to you, Sir, my most sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly, which is a tribute to Argentina, whose commitment to peace and international co-operation is known to all of us here. It is a country to which Finland is bound by ties of warm friendship. We know your experience and your abilities, and we are certain that with your leadership this session will be a truly fruitful one.

* The President returned to the Chair.

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At the same time I want to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the forty-second session, Mr. Florin, for the excellent manner in which he discharged his responsibilities.

I should also like once again to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, with whom we enjoy relations of deep trust and esteem, and to reiterate to him the Finnish Government's appreciation for his effort to promote the principles of the United Nations Charter and to strengthen the role and machinery of the Organization.

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The United Nations has often been criticized for its inability to perform the tasks entrusted to it in the Charter for the preservation of peace and security. The role of the Organization has been questioned. This criticism has not been totally unfounded. The opportunities offered by the Organization have not always been taken. The United Nations has too often been utilized as a forum for aggravating differences.

Yet the dramatic developments of the past weeks and months have demonstrated that the United Nations is still able to serve as a forum for resolute action in the interests of security and peace. The authority of the Organization has been enhanced by the recent achievements in various parts of the world. Those achievements demonstrate that the United Nations is an invaluable tool of peace-making and co-operation. This development is particularly welcome to Finland. My country has throughout maintained its firm belief in multilateral co-operation and support for the world Organization.

Indeed, there is hope that confrontation is gradually giving way to co-operation. This development has been most striking in East-West relations. The dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States has widened and deepened significantly. Fresh approaches can be discerned in big-Power relations. These approaches have led to tangible progress in reducing the risk of war and military confrontation in Europe.

Serious international problems cannot be solved without patient work and willingness to negotiate in good faith. Our Organization is the one best suited to offer a forum for a meeting of minds and a mechanism for resolving conflicts. Recent positive developments bear witness to the fact that the many years of efforts in the United Nations and elsewhere to work out solutions to these conflicts have not been wasted. In some instances results have been achieved which a year ago seemed nearly out of reach.

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The United Nations must now decisively seize the opportunities offered by the existing favourable international atmosphere. Struggling with a serious financial crisis, and after years of soul-searching, the United Nations must re-emerge as an important factor in inter-State relations.

The late President Kekkonen of Finland once said in this Assembly:

"Rather than as judges, we see ourselves here as physicians".

(A/PV.1040, p. 489, para. 10)

The policies of Finland in the United Nations still accord with that vision. In fact, we believe that the whole Organization very largely follows the same precept, and should continue to do so. Acute problems may require skilful management and treatment. A strong world Organization is needed in order to make this possible.

The new situation warrants a reassessment of international approaches to conflict resolution. In order to function effectively, our Organization needs a wider communality of views. Decisions on important issues should be made by consensus. A basis for such a communality already exists. It is the Charter of the United Nations and strict respect for all its provisions by all nations, whether big or small, aligned, neutral or non-aligned.

Today, in the light of recent experiences, nobody should deny that international problems can be treated and solved in negotiations between the parties concerned. Nobody should deny that the United Nations can also be helpful in making such negotiations possible. Nobody must forget that the United Nations, in the Charter, has set universally accepted principles for all States, and in fact has enjoined States to settle their disputes if possible through negotiations. Dialogue and negotiations constitute the very essence of an orderly conduct of international affairs.

The results achieved this year are encouraging. For example, I pay tribute to the successful efforts made with great patience in dealing with the situation in

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Afghanistan. The services rendered by the United Nations in this matter have been crucial. Many uncertainties remain regarding the future of Afghanistan, but the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the return of the refugees, together with a broad programme of humanitarian assistance, should make it possible for the people of Afghanistan to resume building its own future in peace.

The cease-fire worked out between Iran and Iraq is a major achievement, both by the parties and the United Nations. After years of bloodshed a cessation of hostilities was negotiated on the basis of a resolution adopted by the Security Council. This achievement would not have been possible without the universally appreciated peace-making efforts of the Secretary-General. In the negotiations on a final settlement of the conflict every effort should be made to work out solutions acceptable to all.

We have followed with keen interest the negotiations concerning the problems in south-western Africa and the process of independence for Namibia. Not only the peoples concerned, but the whole world community, are anxious to see further concrete results emanate from these negotiations. The progress made so far is promising, and it is to be hoped that the ongoing negotiations will, without delay, lead to independence for Namibia and to a durable solution in the area. Meanwhile, the world community is also entitled to react appropriately to the intolerable situation that continues to prevail in both Namibia and South Africa.

In South Africa the apartheid system remains fundamentally unchanged. Finland unequivocally condemns the apartheid system as an abhorrent violation of human rights and human dignity. The need for concerted international pressure on South Africa to change its policies remains. There can be no compromise on the principle of the equality of every human being or on the need to have that principle observed in practice.

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As a response to the inhumane racial policies of South Africa, Finland, together with the other Nordic countries, is now implementing the third common Nordic Programme of Action against Apartheid. Full economic and other sanctions are already in operation. We are now concentrating on additional measures, trying in particular to work for wider sanctions, including mandatory sanctions to be instituted by the Security Council and for increased international assistance to the front-line States of southern Africa.

The continuing stalemate in the long-standing conflict of the Middle East is in striking contrast with events in other parts of the world. No immediate solution is in sight. Violent developments in the occupied territories underscore the need for a speedy solution to the conflict. The basis for a solution is there. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, must form the basis for a final solution. Likewise, progress is not possible without recognition by Israel and the Palestinians of each other's rights. An international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations constitutes the best way to achieve a negotiated settlement. The convening of such a conference, which is almost universally desired, is long overdue.

It is not difficult to find other examples of problems in respect of which patient work carried out within the framework of the United Nations deserves to be rewarded with success. Where spectacular success has not yet been possible the role of the United Nations has often remained one of helping to keep the precarious peace or of continuing to encourage and facilitate a political dialogue.

My country is always willing to support such work. By providing personnel for the United Nations good-offices mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan and for the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group, Finland tries to do its part in

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helping to implement the agreements reached this year under United Nations auspices. Finnish soldiers are now serving the United Nations in all the ongoing peace-keeping operations. We are ready for the next one, the one we had expected would have begun many years ago, namely to help in Namibia's quick transition to independence.

My observations do not mean that Finland is in every respect satisfied with the experience gained heretofore in United Nations peace-keeping efforts. The use of military personnel contributed on a voluntary basis by various countries for peace-keeping in the service of the United Nations is intended primarily as a temporary measure. Its purpose is to create better conditions for the political task of peace-making. Yet we have seen that too often the United Nations troops have become the guardians of a status quo in which no meaningful political progress is taking place.

A better common understanding of the basic goals and principles of peace-keeping is needed. The United Nations peace-keeping activities should be put on a secure financial and political basis. A comprehensive review of peace-keeping is now called for. In that process the need for sufficient financial reserves for peace-making and peace-keeping should also be dealt with. This is more urgent than ever now when the lack of financial predictability threatens the very launching of peace-keeping operations. For Finland, as a major contributing country, this is of especial significance.

Finland welcomes the progress made in the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States that has led to agreement on the elimination of their land-based intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles. We look forward to concrete results in the continuing negotiations with regard to the reduction of long-range strategic nuclear weapons. We would also hope that the Conference on

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Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which is now meeting at Vienna, would soon agree on a continued and enlarged process of confidence-building and disarmament in Europe.

Disarmament has become one of the principal concerns of the Organization. Finland took the third special session devoted to disarmament very seriously. We made a number of proposals and worked hard for them and for a successful outcome of the session itself. We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on a comprehensive concluding document. However, a number of important initiatives were introduced at the session, and the collective efforts of Member States with regard to disarmament must continue.

In order to promote disarmament, Member States should be willing and able to use the agencies and organizations in the United Nations family more effectively. The multilateral approach is necessary if we want to have an effective ban on chemical weapons, if we want to monitor nuclear testing everywhere, and if we want to make more progress in the urgent task of limiting conventional weapons. In our opinion the United Nations could also usefully assume an increasing role in the field of verification of compliance with disarmament and arms-control agreements that have been concluded.

Verification is tantamount to the collection of information and the comparison of that information with certain pre-established rules and standards. Such tasks are already successfully handled by certain agencies in the United Nations system. In the security field relevant experiences have been gathered, for example by observers on peace-keeping missions. The systematic collection of data related to the verification of agreements in the disarmament field could be a logical step in expanding the useful functions of the Secretariat.

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I have now spoken mainly of the political tasks of the Organization, of the management and settlement of disputes. The magnitude of the work performed by the United Nations appears even more striking when the activities pertaining to economic and social issues and human rights are also taken into account. My country will continue to do its share in those United Nations activities as well.

Combating the ever-increasing degradation of the environment will be one of the greatest challenges to mankind during the coming decades. The state of the environment will not be improved unless the detrimental consequences of human activities are not systematically taken into account. That is one of the central ideas of the concept of sustainable development discussed in depth during the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is necessary that the work already started towards sustainable development within the United Nations system be intensified.

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Finland's strong belief in multilateralism has been repeatedly stated. Only global multilateral efforts can help us to bridge the dangerously wide, and widening, gap between rich and poor. Environmental and developmental concerns make us focus on the interrelated problems where multilateral co-operation, and especially the United Nations, has a decisive role to play. We need a strong and effective United Nations system, with all its components, if we are to succeed.

We expect that the process of reforming the economic and social structures of the United Nations will be continued so that concrete results are achieved. That is an essential element in the process of restructuring the United Nations as a whole in order to improve its ability to meet present and future challenges.

The future of world economic development is closely related to the creation of a better environment for world trade. We are convinced that the negotiations in the context of the Uruguay Round and the work carried on by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will enhance possibilities for a better external environment in the field of trade, which will be beneficial to both developing and developed countries and to their peoples. A positive development is the entry into force of the Common Fund for Commodities, which will give a new impetus to the important work of UNCTAD in this area.

As the 1990s approach, the international community should consider comprehensive measures which take into account the changing circumstances in the international economic environment. The debt crisis affects us all. Renewed emphasis on such development objectives as poverty reduction, population policies and environmentally sustainable development is called for. At the same time, an assessment of the relationship between domestic policies and international support measures is required. Consideration at this session of the preparation and

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elaboration of an international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade offers an opportunity to that end. It is a challenge to the whole international community which Finland, for its part, is ready to take up.

Over the past years Finland has been one of the few industrialized countries that have rapidly and substantially increased the volume of their aid. The budget proposal for 1989 now before our Parliament contains appropriations for official development assistance representing 0.7 per cent of our gross national product. Thus, Finland will reach the target set by the United Nations.

The United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was reviewed just before the beginning of this session. Finland has actively supported the United Nations Programme and has continued to stress the importance of the development of African agriculture, measures against drought and desertification, human resources development and policy reforms. The necessary domestic structural adjustment measures in Africa can be sustainable when complemented by external assistance in a spirit of partnership.

Some two thirds of Finnish bilateral assistance is directed towards African countries. Compared with the 1986 figures, Finland's assistance to the programme of multilateral financing institutions benefiting Africa has more than tripled this year. In the future too, sub-Saharan countries will remain major recipients of Finnish development assistance. Continued stress will be placed on co-operation with the countries of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference.

The costs of the United Nations are not high. I will not repeat the various comparisons that have been made with the costs of other human activities. Nor will I attempt to calculate the usefulness of the United Nations in quantitative terms. Finland demands efficiency in the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization. We pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his implementation of

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administrative reforms. We realize that the cutting of costs may sometimes lead to improved overall performance. However, regardless of the level established in any given year for the United Nations budget, there are certain principles regarding the financing of our joint undertaking that in our view must always be respected by all.

The United Nations Charter is a treaty between sovereign States, which have agreed to abide by certain obligations. Among these are rules that specify how decisions are taken and how costs are shared. The United Nations may sometimes have implemented programmes that Finland has not supported, but we have never doubted that it is our legal obligation to contribute our share to cover the costs of all legally established programmes. In our view, assessed contributions should be paid in full and on time. The unilateral withholding of contributions undermines multilateral co-operation.

Despite some positive signs in the financing of the Organization, the United Nations continues to operate with inadequate income. The Secretary-General has appealed to Member States in order to secure the financing of United Nations activities. He is, in particular, referring to the new challenges that the Organization is facing in peace-making and peace-keeping. If additional expenses have to be met, Finland, for its part, will be prepared to participate in joint action to help.

It is clear to my Government that by its work the United Nations continues to demonstrate its usefulness every day. We need the world Organization. It is only logical that my country, for its part, wants to be useful to the Organization and thereby help to serve the needs of Member States. The Finnish Government continues to pledge its allegiance to the Charter and to joint efforts to promote the vital objectives of our Organization. That we can best do by pursuing our long-standing

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policy of neutrality and by a consistent search for reconciliation, dialogue and negotiation. That, then, is the Finnish credo in this forum.

The General Assembly is embarking on its work on a positive note. Let it demonstrate that the world community is united in the search for peaceful co-operation and dialogue. Let it become testimony that Member States want to see the United Nations effective and strong, and to assume responsibility for it.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.