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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 28 September 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina)
later: Mr. AL-KHALIFA (Bahrain)
(Vice-President)
later: Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina)
(President)

- Address by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Genscher (Federal Republic of Germany)
Mr. Qian Qichen (China)
Sir Geoffrey Howe (United Kingdom)

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

ADDRESS BY HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH JABER AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH, AMIR OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This morning, the Assembly will first hear an address by the Amir of the State of Kuwait.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, 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 Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sheikh AL-SABAH (interpretation from Arabic): When we Moslems open our statements by saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," we in fact renew a pledge before Allah, the Lord, to state the truth and to uphold justice, to advocate compassion within the framework of human relations - for mercy is the linchpin of brotherhood, human rights and co-operation towards progress.

It is on the premise of such a pledge by man before his Lord and by man to his fellow human brothers that I address you now.

It gives me pleasure to express to you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), of which I have the honour to be the chairman during its fifth session, and in the name of the State of Kuwait, as well as on my own personal behalf, sincere congratulations on your election to preside over the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Your election represents a responsibility entrusted to you at the outset of an era of global understanding when the world has made some genuine steps towards peace and co-operation. Yet further major breakthroughs are still required in order to address major long-standing universal problems. It is our hope that, by

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virtue of your personal skills, experience and the confidence we have all placed in you, further progress will be made.

You, Mr. President, belong to a friendly and beautiful country, Argentina, with whom my country, Kuwait, has amicable relations of co-operation and mutual respect. We do look forward to stronger ties between our two nations in larger and more diverse areas of co-operation, and we hope that you personally may perhaps be able to visit us in Kuwait some time in the future as a dear guest.

I should also like to put on record our appreciation for the efforts made by the President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin, who demonstrated his deep commitment to the issues of international peace and co-operation as well as his outstanding capabilities and wealth of experience. I should like to recall here the close ties, based on mutual trust and respect, that exist between the German Democratic Republic and Kuwait in several expanding spheres.

In addition, we in Kuwait - along with those throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds - pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his constructive and sincere efforts in the causes of peace, as well as for his positive and forthcoming approach represented by his personal participation in international and regional meetings. His prudence and patience have been crucial to ensuring fruitful co-operation and reconciliation. We thus express to him and to his aides and representatives our deep appreciation.

This year, as the result of a tragic accident, the Organization of the Islamic Conference lost a staunch advocate of the Organization, our brother and friend the late General Modammad Zia Al-Haq, former President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Tributes to his memory were paid and condolences were expressed in this

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Hall over the loss of General Zia Al-Haq and his companions. The late General, may his soul rest in peace, demonstrated remarkable leadership in steering his country, and in that framework he served as Chairman of the second session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and presided over its Science and Technology Committee from its inception. General Zia Al-Haq tirelessly strived to close the ranks of the Moslem world and to defend the cause of Islam. On behalf of the OIC, I should like to take this opportunity to express our thanks for your noble expressions of sympathy for the late General, his family and his nation, and to extend once again our condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives in the tragic aircraft crash.

Mankind has attached high hopes to the United Nations ever since its creation, for it represents the supreme forum in which all the peoples of the world voice their aspirations and concerns about their problems. Within the framework of the United Nations system the wealthiest, most powerful and most advanced nations meet with the poorest, the weakest and the most vulnerable countries. The United Nations presence has been a major factor in preventing a third world war. We view the world Organization as a larger workshop for moulding and refining human brotherhood and international co-operation and as an instrument for dialogue and peaceful coexistence in lieu of confrontation.

That should prompt us all to enhance our support for the United Nations and its various organizations and agencies. However, although a multilateral system of this scale and with such a magnitude of responsibility may be in need of some review from time to time, such exercises of reform must not preclude sustained support and help for the United Nations system in order to ensure its ability to fulfil its obligations. We believe that the enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations should go hand in hand with efforts to ensure its existence.

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Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is based on a shared vision of goals and means, as well as on a common approach in addressing global and regional problems. We all believe in overall human unity, in human rights and in the dignity of the human person; we believe in the fact that the individual human being is at the centre of the human pursuit of advancement. All of us believe in common action towards peace and in respect for every people's right to self-determination, to establish its State on its national territory, and to choose its life-style without any external interference.

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The Organization of the Islamic Conference was established in 1969, following the criminal arson committed against the Al-Aqsa mosque in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the holy Arab city of Jerusalem; it reflected the modern Islamic awakening; it manifested the rejection of aggression and terrorism; and it expressed the wish to join a world march towards civilized progress.

The fifth Islamic summit, to which Kuwait was honoured to act as host in January 1987, adopted a set of resolutions that both reaffirmed earlier resolutions and responded to the most recent world-wide developments with international and regional implications.

States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference are ever seeking co-ordinated action both within the organization and outside it on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of nations and regional co-operation. Two examples are the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and broader co-operation within the framework of the League of Arab States. We also maintain ties of co-operation with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity, the European Community, the big Powers and, indeed, the entire world community in the United Nations and its agencies.

These are bridges we should like to see widened and made more effective, and in all our endeavours in this connection we recognize that we live in a world of ever-changing international relations whose diverse cultural focal points vary in their scope and impact. Given that diversity, coexistence and co-operation on the basis of mutual respect is imperative. It has therefore become essential that each and every civilization view other cultures through a more tolerant and objective prism.

Among the most significant trends in today's international life is the recent move by the two super-Powers towards mutual understanding; this has resulted in agreement on a reduction in the arsenal of nuclear weapons. That agreement is all

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the more significant in the light of its having been proven that the use of nuclear weapons could lead to massive loss of human life. Moreover, the super-Power accord coincided with the defusing of several complex international crises.

I wish here to pay a tribute to the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union for the breakthroughs achieved by the United States President, Mr. Ronald Reagan, and the Soviet leader, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev.

Smaller nations view this rapprochement with great optimism and now cherish fresh hope that the new understanding will in time have a positive effect on the long-awaited just solution of their own problems with a view to attaining their legitimate rights.

I turn now from East-West relations to North-South issues. The single most important question here is foreign debt and the mounting debt-servicing burden. This problem, in its current magnitude, has come to impede and severely restrict development. It is also being used as a tool to exert pressure on the South in an attempt to secure its raw materials at depressed prices while selling to the countries of the South the North's manufactured goods and cereals at constantly rising prices. This results in an ever-widening gap between the two groups.

Furthermore, by exploiting the vulnerability of the poor - and in some cases by tendering up-front payments without due regard for the value of the human being of the South - some industrial enterprises of certain countries of the North have maliciously used places within the national territory of a number of poor nations of the South as dumping grounds for nuclear and toxic wastes without taking effective precautions. In certain cases, in fact, dumping took place without the knowledge of the Governments concerned and without any regard for the most fundamental human rights, including that of the physical safety of present and future generations.

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This whole problem can be posed in the form of a single question: Why is all this tremendous pressure - including acts of sabotage - exerted on the South? It is hard enough for us in the South to cope with natural disasters, including long droughts, devastating floods, swarms of locusts, and epidemics that dominate the world news. But unfortunately our friends in the North choose to aggravate our problems by creating additional plagues that destroy our ecological system and our human resources and undermine our ability to move forward towards a better future.

In this connection, I should like to take this opportunity to outline a three-point plan of action:

First, we call upon creditor nations to meet to examine the question of writing off the interest due on their loans to the debtor countries. This should be coupled with giving up a portion of the loan principal due from the poorest group of debtor nations. Kuwait, as a creditor country, stands ready to attend such a meeting and is willing to comply with whatever resolutions might be adopted in this respect. In our view, such an initiative represents a far better approach to addressing the matter in a more practical and effective way than leaving it to be resolved on the basis of the demands of the debtors. It also has merit in view of the divergent views of the creditors themselves. We believe that, if carried out, this proposal would benefit the debtor countries by helping them implement their development projects, and would have a broad positive impact on economic and social activities in both creditor and debtor countries.

Secondly, we call on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to reconsider their stringent conditions affecting States seeking development assistance from them. We call for amendments introducing greater flexibility and taking the humanitarian factor more into account, both to reflect differences among States and to suit the conditions prevailing in debtor nations. Ultimately, this would strengthen their development efforts.

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Thirdly, we call for expansion and regulation of North-South scientific and technical assistance. Human-resources development in this context is extremely important, for without it mathematical statistics lose much of their significance. Eventually, this will lead to concerted efforts at short-term and long-term conservation of natural and human resources. It will reinforce action to combat pollution and promote and expand development plans. Thus, science will be used once more as a tool for rehabilitation, construction and progress rather than as an instrument of destruction and decadence.

The inhabitants of the North and of the South are in fact brothers who just happen to live in different places; they all live within the framework of a single human family. Civilized co-operation is a most desirable convergence of North and South and should presage the dawn of a new era of genuine universal brotherhood.

If some of us continue to speak of the natural resources of some countries in the South and to the world's oil producing areas, we must remember these basic facts: that oil is a non-renewable natural resource; that scientific research for alternatives to oil continues unabated; and that the use of oil is but one phase in the long history of energy. Therefore, the most promising hope for the oil-producing countries lies in the constant improvement of the scientific and technical capabilities of present and future generations, for true wealth is found in the human intellect, which lends itself to infinite expansion and refinement.

Through science and co-operation in the framework of a new international economic and humanitarian order, we all hope that with help from Allah the Almighty we shall be able to defeat poverty and starvation and shall be better prepared to confront changes in the physical world and to make increasing contributions towards global intellectual innovation. That is the real insurance policy for generations to come.

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As we look forward to the establishment of a new economic and humanitarian order, it is the duty of us all to co-operate in combating the terrorism that has mushroomed in various places, regardless of its causes, methods or goals. We should work together to enforce proper effective legislation against terrorism so innocent human lives do not become a commodity subject to bargaining under threat or blackmail or in the context of unjust commercial transactions.

We in Kuwait are in the forefront of the community of nations when it comes to condemning terrorism. We have suffered from that plague and have managed, with the help of Allah the Almighty and with the solidarity of the Kuwaiti people, to withstand its evils. When a Kuwaiti civilian jetliner was hijacked last April, the international community rendered its support to us, which strengthened our will and determination to weather the storm. We acknowledge that help with deep gratitude and appreciation.

But we must draw a clear line between oppressive terrorism carried out openly or covertly by individuals, groups and States on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the legitimate right to self-defence and national defence and resistance against suppression and oppression, as provided for in universal covenants and international law.

That brings me to the issue of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most remarkable achievement of the United Nations system. But it is too often tarnished by acts of aggression. Therefore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be scrupulously preserved and protected by the double power of conscience and the force of law.

Despite all the efforts of the international community and the elaborate covenants adopted by the United Nations in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and despite the universal consensus on the need to promote human dignity, we still feel the presence in certain places of a force

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running against the tide of history. This takes the form of attempts to usurp the rights of others and to commit unjust acts against them.

This has created problems that we hope will be justly resolved so human energy can be mobilized for co-operation and building rather than for waste and conflict.

It has been the lot of the Islamic world to see within its lands a number of burning crises, most recently the Iran-Iraq war, the question of Palestine, the internal strife within Lebanon and acts of aggression against it, and the problem of Afghanistan.

The world has welcomed the acceptance by the Islamic Republic of Iran of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which had been accepted earlier by sisterly Iraq, and the declaration of a cease-fire and the start of negotiations, which we hope will remain on course until all obstacles are cleared and the desired goals achieved.

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Resolution 598 (1987), in its paragraph 8, requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to examine, in consultation with the States of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region. The Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf always welcomes co-operation with the United Nations, as well as with Iraq and Iran, to restore security and a just peace to the Gulf region and to ensure freedom of navigation for all. The Council is in constant touch with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as with the parties concerned.

The eight-year war, with all its sacrifices, has provided yet another proof that no matter how long hostilities might last, the belligerents will eventually have no option but coexistence, good-neighbourliness and co-operation in promoting life, while showing respect for the national sovereignty and independence of every State, and for the system of government it has chosen for itself. The peace sought warrants sincere efforts, free of any side issues that cannot be substantiated by concrete evidence, for to raise such side issues would be to create obstacles that would impede the long-awaited peace for which we have all been yearning and divert attention from the acts of aggression committed against a defenseless people by the Israeli entity in utter disregard of human rights and international norms and instruments.

The Palestinian uprising, with all the suffering involved and its noble goals, is a subject of daily discussion in the international mass media. The Palestinians are defending their land right there on their own soil: they did not leave their homes to fight against anyone. The Palestinian uprising represents the 40-year-long pursuit of a legitimate right.

I now address peoples and friends represented in this Hall, and ask them: did you not fight for your independence and drive invading armies out of your

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territory? Did you not engage in secret and open resistance and attain your independence by virtue of your valour? Is it then surprising that youth, women and children with virtually nothing at their disposal but the mere stones of their land should use them to demand their legitimate rights and to reject life in their homeland under Israeli oppression and brutalities?

All the Palestinian people is demanding is its independent state on its own land, with its capital in Jerusalem, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole legitimate representative.

All sitting in this Hall have a homeland and a house to live in. We all carry passports and know where to be safe following our meetings here; we all look forward to being happy with our families at the end of the day. The Palestinian people demands nothing more than we all have.

I should like to put on record our appreciation for the position taken by the European Community on the Middle East problem. The Community's approach is based on dialogue with all the peace-seeking parties. Accordingly, the socialist group within the European Community invited brother Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, to address the European Parliament early this month. It also provided him with an opportunity to meet and deliberate with senior Community officials.

It is our hope that, similarly, fresh and favourable winds will blow across the Atlantic Ocean and reach the New World, which we hope will be able to pay more heed to the righteous Palestinian voice and to demonstrate open-mindedness and tolerance in dialogue with Palestinian intellectuals and legitimate representatives, and to express in stronger terms its condemnation of the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinians. We look forward to the time when the issue of human rights is raised to its proper status, when human rights are a haven built on

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solid rock and not subject to election campaigns and promises made in pursuit of victory in an election year - promises made even at the expense of justice for other peoples and their right to self-determination.

France gave as a gift to the New World the Statue of Liberty, which stands as a symbol of hope for newcomers. We hope the torch atop that statue will continue to burn in the minds and hearts of men and women and not lose its lustre by becoming a mere historic site lacking real meaning as a source of inspiration.

With regard to Lebanon, one of the bitter results of the Israeli invasion of that land is the current turbulent situation there, which has fuelled violent religious, factional and regional conflicts.

The wholesome life of our brothers and sisters in Lebanon stands no chance of continuity without national unity and coexistence among all Lebanese factions. Lebanon's future must be determined entirely by the Lebanese themselves. The occupation forces of the Israeli entity must withdraw from the Lebanese territory they occupy under the pretext of security invoked to justify any act of aggression and expansion.

If some positive steps have been taken towards resolution of the Afghanistan issue, the compliance by all parties concerned with the terms and conditions of the agreement reached represents the right approach and will guarantee a safer and more secure future in which the people of Afghanistan will determine their way of life and the nature of their relations with their neighbours, of their own free will and without pressure from outside.

In the same spirit we welcome the recent steps taken in Namibia and Angola. We hope that the efforts being made will be sustained until Namibia attains free and independent statehood under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).

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The Pretoria Government, however, continues to live under the illusion of racial superiority that has been unanimously condemned by the scientific and religious communities, as well as by international organizations that defend freedom of conscience against injustices and gross violations of human rights of the kind committed by Pretoria.

The repulsive racial discrimination laws currently enforced by the Government of South Africa flout the dignity of the African person in his native homeland and deny him his historic and de facto rights. The body of apartheid laws must be annulled. We maintain that legitimate rights must sooner or later be attained.

At this point we should like to join all those throughout the world calling for the freedom of the African national leader Nelson Mandela, who valiantly struggles for the right of his fellow countrymen to achieve national dignity, and for that reason suffers oppression and the harshness of gaol.

From this rostrum, we salute that hero and other freedom fighters everywhere in the world. We want to reassure them and to tell them of our confidence that there will be a better tomorrow and the sun of freedom will shine, and vicious oppressors will never stop that from happening.

It is our hope that stability will prevail in South-East Asia and between the two Koreas, as well as in the Caribbean region, and that East and West, North and South will work together to build the desired economic and humanitarian system.

Regardless of the origins of the regional conflicts I have mentioned, it is the human being who ignites the spark of war. It is also the human being who is the fuel of war. In the final analysis, war represents the ultimate violation of human rights. Thus, ending any war represents a major victory for the cause of those rights.

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I have come here to convey to the Assembly greetings of peace from over 1,000 million Moslems living in all corners of the globe. We come extending a hand of brotherhood in the hope that present and future generations of mankind will enjoy increased prosperity, harmony, co-operation and peace.

Each and every large human community, Muslim or otherwise, has its own problems and its own aspirations. We have come here to co-operate with members in addressing our common problems and in seeking fulfilment of our common aspirations.

In conclusion, I should like to pay tribute to the General Assembly and the Security Council for all the resolutions and decisions they have adopted in order to reaffirm legitimate rights and to open doors to reconciliation and peace.

To you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his staff, we should like to express our thanks and appreciation for all the efforts that have been made and continue to be made in the interest of peace and for the settlement of conflicts and disputes by means of wisdom and dialogue.

Tribute is also due to the world mass media for focusing attention on human-rights issues. Special mention should be made of the media's live coverage of the Palestinian uprising and the resistance to racial discrimination in South Africa.

To all distinguished representatives and guests present here, I should like to extend thanks on behalf of the Islamic world and in the name of Kuwait and in my own name for their kind attention.

May I ask all members to convey to their respective Governments and peoples our sincere greetings and appreciation.

I, for my part, shall convey to my people in the Islamic and Arab world, as well as in Kuwait, the sentiments of friendship and welcome I have received from you.

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God bless you and may He bring peace, mercy and grace upon all of you.

The President (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Amir of the State of Kuwait for the important statement he has just made.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

* Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT: I 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 this afternoon, at 6 p.m.

Mr. GENSCHER (Federal Republic of Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): Please convey, Sir, my warm congratulations to the President on his election to preside over the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I wish him luck and success in his high office.

As in previous years, my delegation will do everything possible to help the General Assembly achieve positive results.

I wish to thank the President of the forty-second session, Ambassador Peter Florin, for his successful contribution. He guided the Assembly's proceedings circumspectly and pragmatically and with a view to getting results.

This session begins in encouraging circumstances. When we met here 12 months ago the war between Iraq and Iran was claiming countless victims day after day. In Afghanistan an end to the human suffering was not foreseeable. In southern Africa, too, there was no cause for hope.

Today the weapons in the Gulf are silent. Negotiations have been begun between the warring parties. A year after its unanimous adoption by the Security Council, resolution 598 (1987) has been accepted by both parties to the conflict as a basis for a cease-fire.

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Republic of Germany)

In Afghanistan the Geneva agreements, likewise achieved with the decisive assistance of the United Nations, created the conditions for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Fifty per cent of those troops have already left the country in accordance with the terms of the agreements.

Following his talks in southern Africa the Secretary-General has expressed his confidence with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

None of this progress has simply fallen into the world Organization's lap. These achievements are the outcome of a favourable change in the international climate and are the product of the manifold efforts of the principal organs of the United Nations, above all its Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

The Secretary-General has said that serving the cause of peace is worth the maximum personal endeavour. He is making that endeavour and we all, the Members of the United Nations, are grateful to him for it. He has proved wrong those who had doubts about the United Nations. He encourages all who seek to strengthen its peace-promoting role.

The Federal Republic of Germany has actively supported the United Nations and its Secretary-General.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we have worked constructively for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 435 (1978) and 598 (1987). After the adoption of resolution 598 (1987) we kept in touch with both parties to the conflict, calling upon them to accept and implement it. I appeal to Iraq and Iran to conduct the negotiations with a will to make compromises and to achieve a comprehensive, just and honourable peace settlement.

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Republic of Germany)

In Afghanistan the withdrawal of the Soviet troops opens up the possibility of a new political beginning in that country. This opportunity should be seized by all concerned. Like the European Community, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is ready to provide substantial humanitarian assistance in the process of repatriating and reintegrating the millions of refugees and, given the right domestic conditions, to contribute to Afghanistan's reconstruction.

Major progress has also been achieved towards a settlement of the conflicts in southern Africa. Important forward steps have been taken. The South African troops have left Angola. Negotiations are under way for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. We have come a good deal closer to Namibia's independence. Security Council resolution 435 (1978) has always been and remains the only viable route to this goal. As a member of the Contact Group, my Government offers its good offices in seeking the implementation of that resolution.

Developments have also been favourable in other parts of the world.

In Cambodia the contours of a peace settlement are beginning to appear.

Talks between the Governments of South Korea and North Korea now seem to be within the realm of the possible.

In Central America the continuing cease-fire can facilitate dialogue between the conflicting parties so that democracy may be firmly established.

A peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Western Sahara and between Libya and Chad is moving nearer.

Representatives of the two ethnic groups in Cyprus are negotiating on the island's future.

The Middle East is still a source of concern. Negotiations are still not in sight, although the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories shows that the

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status quo is untenable. An international conference on the Middle East is and remains the appropriate framework for the necessary negotiations on a peace settlement that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and guarantee the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secured borders.

We wish sorely-tried Lebanon a peaceful solution to its problems based on sovereignty, unity and national reconciliation.

If we want to secure peace world-wide once and for all we must strengthen the forces of peace. This means, first of all, that we must strengthen the United Nations. To achieve this we must continue the successful endeavours to bring about internal reforms. What we need above all is full implementation of the Charter. We are prepared to consider seriously all proposals aimed at enhancing the peace-promoting powers of our Organization. This is also the objective of our initiative for preventing conflicts which has been put before this session of the General Assembly for final approval. We deem it essential that the United Nations be in a position to act before a conflict actually breaks out.

The kind of peace we pursue can be based solely on the rule of law. It must derive from the right of self-determination of nations and from the civil, economic and social human rights enshrined in the International Covenants on Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. There is a growing awareness that all public power comes up against its absolute limit in human rights. Respect for human rights is not only an internal affair. Within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process those rights have become a central issue.

One of the most blatant mockeries of human rights and manifestations of disregard for those rights is the system of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa. We demand the abolition of this unreformable system.

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Republic of Germany)

We demand the release of Nelson Mandela, Eric Molobi and all other political prisoners in South Africa. We demand the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and all other organizations of the black majority so as to open the way for a peaceful national dialogue.

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of Germany)

Let there be no doubt about it: we will not be prohibited from helping anti-apartheid organizations.

The chairman of the largest single trade union in the world, the Metal Workers' Union in the Federal Republic of Germany, has drawn up a catalogue of minimum standards for labour relations to be respected by the South African subsidiaries of German companies. They afford South African unions and workers, irrespective of their colour, the same claim to social justice as their colleagues in the Federal Republic of Germany. Large German companies have promised to apply these minimum standards in South Africa. From this rostrum I appeal to all trade unions and all firms to follow this example.

The rule of law implies absolute respect for international law. That respect is the foundation of policies that are geared to negotiation and agreements rather than to the threat or use of force. The rule of law implies protection of and respect for minorities, be they religious, national or ethnic minorities. All such minorities have a right to develop their identity, to cultivate their language and to live according to their cultural traditions and to exercise their religion, while enjoying equal political and legal rights.

The rule of law is menaced by international terrorism. The international community must oppose terrorism, which is hostile to human dignity and any human order, with still greater determination.

The rule of law implies joint efforts to combat drug trafficking. This is an increasingly urgent international problem which can only be solved through the joint efforts of all governments. My Government hopes that the deliberations of the forthcoming diplomatic conference in Vienna will lead to a United Nations convention to combat illegal drug trafficking. This would mean considerable progress.

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of Germany)

We can look to the future with confidence. The community of nations is showing greater respect for the rule of law. There is a growing willingness to resolve even the most serious differences by negotiation. This indicates a fundamental change in international relations. The core of these changes is in the attempts by West and East to place their relations on a new foundation. One of the reasons why the world Organization has been able to achieve progress in the peaceful settlement of conflicts is that West and East have increasingly been co-operating to this end. It has become obvious that West-East confrontation must not be carried over into the third world but must, where it arises, be defused step by step and, as far as possible, be resolved through dialogue and co-operation.

The progress of the European Community is one of the promising world trends. By creating a community of 12 European democracies we have won a victory over national egoism, power politics and prejudice. It is the greatest and finest victory in the history of Europe. It has not cost a single human life, yet it is winning us the future.

Franco-German friendship and co-operation are at the core of this future-oriented development. The European Community is the most advanced association of sovereign States to date. The dynamism and attractiveness of our Community are growing constantly. The European Community has committed itself to free world trade and world economic co-operation. It is becoming a driving force of growth not only for ourselves but for the world economy as a whole. This makes us resolute opponents of protectionism.

The growth potential of the single market and of the common social and monetary area will make the European Community even more capable of developing a world economic partnership with the North American democracies and Japan. By increasing our economic strength we can also increasingly promote the development

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of the third world. The larger European market will be able to absorb even more products from the third world.

As the Lomé Conventions, our agreements with the Mediterranean area and our co-operation agreements with the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the States of Central America and the Gulf Co-operation Council show, the European Community is already a major partner of the countries of the third world. This co-operation takes place on the basis of equal rights.

The powerful growth of the European Community creates a considerable opportunity for the development of West-East relations. The task now is to plan the architecture of the whole of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. The more the Soviet Union pursues the process of opening itself internally and externally, the more capable it will become of co-operation with the West and the East. We want this reform policy to prove successful. Europe's future lies not in hoping for, let alone seeking, the destabilization of the other side, but rather in co-operation and productive competition.

The manifold forms of co-operation will determine the architecture of the peaceful order in Europe or, as it also can be termed, the common European house.

The ensuing interdependence will enhance mutual confidence and make for greater stability. This new order must not be characterized by fences, but by open doors, by freedom of movement for people, for ideas and goods, as well as respect for human rights.

One of the pillars of the European structure is and will remain the European Community oriented towards openness and co-operation. We know that Europe is more than the European Community. President Mitterrand put this most impressively in

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his historic speech in Aachen in 1987. As a result of increasing co-operation, of genuine détente and of disarmament, the military elements will lose significance in the West-East relationship, whereas political, economic, ecological and cultural co-operation will gain in importance.

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Thanks to this development, West and East will derive a fresh potential which can be used not for disarmament but for the advancement of their own societies and for co-operation with the developing countries.

The change for the better in the whole of Europe derives energy from the revival of our continent's identity. That identity emanates from our common European history, Europe's glories and aberrations, its common culture - to which all European nations have made major contributions, and from the awareness of our mutual responsibility for the future of our continent and for peace and development in the world. Decades of separation have not made two Europes out of one Europe; decades of separation have not made two German nations out of one German nation. The German people in the heart of Europe, having often been in conflict with its neighbours, has learned its lessons from history. Both German States are meeting their responsibility for peace in Europe, including through mutual co-operation. That benefits all Europeans.

Through our membership of the European Community and the Atlantic alliance, we Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany have responsibly used the freedom we regained after the Second World War. We have established the strongest imaginable bond States can have: the bond of common values. Our commitment to peace in Europe also led us to conclude treaties with the Soviet Union, the Polish People's Republic and Czechoslovakia, and to conclude the Basic Treaty with the German Democratic Republic. It led, too, to our active participation in bringing about the Final Act of Helsinki and in the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). We regard the development of our relations with the Soviet Union, which are of crucial importance to us, as playing a key role in improving the overall West-East relationship. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union will serve that purpose.

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We have been calling for a peaceful order in Europe ever since the Atlantic alliance presented its Harmel report in 1967. For a long time we received no answer to this proposed grand design for a better Europe. The policy initiated by General-Secretary Gorbachev in the Soviet Union can turn the design contained in the Harmel report into reality. This new policy in the Soviet Union meets not merely with a favourable but with a constructive response from us. We all have a responsibility to use every opportunity to bring about a change for the better. The distinct improvement in United States-Soviet relations indicates the opportunities arising therefrom.

The Final Act of Helsinki marks the course towards a peaceful order in Europe in which States with different political and social systems can live together in peaceful competition without fear of one another. By seeking to establish such a peaceful order in Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany is complying with the mandate of its Constitution, the Basic Law, which is to serve the cause of peace in Europe and to overcome the separation of our indivisible nation. Our efforts to achieve the early conclusion of the Vienna follow-up meeting with the adoption of a substantive and well-balanced final document should bring us another step forward towards a European peaceful order.

We are today confronted with the task of protecting mankind from the dangers which man himself has created. Technological development leaves in our hands the decision whether we create a better and more humane world or we perish. The responsibility not only for ourselves but for all future generations must determine our policies, our thinking and our actions.

In view of the danger of nuclear annihilation, the disarmament process had to begin with nuclear disarmament. In this connection the Treaty on

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intermediate-range nuclear forces represents a breakthrough of fundamental importance. Up to now arms have only been limited. Now, for the first time, a whole class of weapons is being eliminated. The global elimination of Soviet and United States intermediate-range nuclear weapons must be followed by radical measures with regard to nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons. Reducing the strategic nuclear forces of both super-Powers by half must become a reality.

The shocking pictures of the consequences of the use of chemical weapons prompt me to appeal to all participants in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to bring the now-far-advanced negotiations on a global ban on such weapons to the earliest possible conclusion. Only a world-wide convention ensuring the verifiable prevention of the manufacture, storage, transfer and use of chemical weapons can free mankind from the scourge of these cruel weapons for all time. My Government is playing an active part also in efforts to strengthen all instruments which can be utilized to prevent the use and proliferation of chemical weapons even before a global ban is in force. We welcome President Reagan's initiative calling for a conference of the signatories of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. While pursuing all these efforts, we must devote our entire energy to the task of achieving a global ban as the priority objective.

In the field of conventional arms our aim is to remove superiority and imbalances by means of asymmetrical disarmament. We want to create conditions in Europe in which neither side will still be capable of launching an attack on foreign territory. Large-scale offensive options do not feature in our Western concept. True conventional stability and further confidence-building require also consensus on the question of the defence philosophy underlying the policies. We seek a consensus on the functions to be given to both sides' forces. This must

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cover their size, equipment and command principles. I appeal to all concerned, to all the participants in the CSCE, to adopt before the end of October 1988, together with the final document of the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting, a mandate for the commencement of negotiations on conventional stability. The time is ripe; all must now live up to their responsibility.

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Unlimited armaments do not create unlimited security, but balanced and mutual disarmament can help create more security. That is why disarmament and arms control are just as much an integral part of the security policy of the Atlantic Alliance as our defence efforts.

In the nuclear age war must be made unwageable once and for all. New thinking requires that over the net of deterrence - the safety net of the ultima ratio - an additional net of new, co-operative structures of military security be created which will reduce the enormous risks of exclusive reliance on deterrence.

Being realists, we know that we cannot base today's security on hopes for tomorrow. But, being men of action, meeting our responsibility for the future, we must today already create the foundations for our future security, foundations which must be broader, more solid and stronger than the ones on which peace has been based up to now.

Mankind's future is not threatened by war alone. There is a growing danger of man's destroying his own sources of life on this planet. We are faced with the task of preserving our natural sources of life and pressing ahead with the development of the third world. The two are closely intertwined. At present the world's population is more than 5 billion; soon it will be 6 billion. According to the World Bank statistics, about one billion people live in absolute poverty.

The industrial countries - all industrial countries; not only those in the West but also the socialist States - have a duty to act together. We must use our economic, scientific and technological potentials in order to render development possible and to preserve the world's natural sources of life. This presupposes the development of new forms of transport, new sources of energy, new materials and new production methods. It is on this and not on the development of new and ever more terrible weapons of mass destruction that the energy and the technology of

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industrial countries must be concentrated. What the nations of the third world need from industrial countries is not weapons but help for their development. I repeat my proposal that the United Nations record exports of weapons in a register. I welcome the Soviet Union's support for this proposal as expressed yesterday.

The purpose is also to satisfy the basic needs of hundreds of millions of people in the developing countries. Time and again, at ever shorter intervals, catastrophic food shortages occur which pose a challenge to mankind's solidarity and willingness to help. But humanitarian assistance alone cannot solve the problem. In spite of some favourable trends this year - the world economic situation having improved more than expected - we must admit that poverty in the third world is growing and the debt burden is growing. True, the gross domestic product increased in the developing countries as well last year, but in many instances this improvement is being negated by population growth. Investments for the future are impeded by debt-servicing commitments.

In 1987 the debt-servicing payments of developing countries exceeded incoming funds by \$15 billion. In such circumstances it is impossible for these countries to increase their economic potential.

The situation is particularly serious in the sub-Saharan countries. My Government supports the programme of action adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on Africa. It had previously cancelled about 2.9 billion marks of the debt owed by 20 of these countries. It has also announced its readiness to write off debts worth about 2.3 billion marks for six more African countries that are not among the least developed countries and are prepared to implement adjustment and reform programmes in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

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All donors should include in their official aid to the poorest countries a large grant element. We intend to increase the grant element of our financial co-operation with the developing countries overall. Our development assistance to the least developed countries is already being provided in grant form.*

My Government also proposes that initial, tangible debt-servicing relief should be afforded within the scope of the Paris Club rescheduling operations. It has also decided to broaden and considerably ease the terms of our bilateral financial co-operation with our partners in the third world.

We expect the commercial banks too to increase their commitment in the developing countries. Many of the newly industrializing economies as well are suffering from the consequences of their heavy foreign debts. Here, too, the commercial banks in particular are urgently called upon to provide the funds necessary to ensure the economic development of these countries. Such funds will not bring any long-term benefits, however, unless the recipients carry out effective adjustment programmes which create suitable conditions. We hope that the new Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency will also be conducive to this process.

It remains indispensable to secure free access for developing countries to the markets of industrial countries. The main problem here lies in non-tariff trade barriers. These must be removed in the course of the ongoing Uruguay Round if the concept of free world trade is not to lose its credibility. In the first six months of this year our imports from developing countries increased by over 5 per cent, while corresponding exports are down by more than 8 per cent.

In their joint efforts to promote development the industrial and developing countries must make sure that those very efforts do not themselves become one of

* The President returned to the Chair.

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the factors causing the destruction of the environment. The principle still to be observed is that the industrial countries, when investing in developing countries, should submit to the standards that apply at home.

The idea of introducing an international criminal law for crimes against the environment, which is being considered by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, is right. We must prevent large parts of the third world being turned into poison-garbage depots of the northern over-consumption societies as a result of criminal transport practices, but also as a result of exploitation of the financial distress of some developing countries. The political and economic colonialism of the past must not now be followed by poison-garbage colonialism.

There is more to the relationship between development and ecology than that, however. Many developing countries, owing to their economic plight, are compelled to over-exploit their natural resources.

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The economy-ecology relationship must be made one of the main items of the agenda in the North-South dialogue. The violation and destruction of nature is much the same as the violation of human rights. The damage caused in one country is the concern of all. Who would still dispute that this has long since become a task of world domestic policy? For this reason, all German development projects are thoroughly examined as to their compatibility with the environment. Such a review should be carried out as a matter of course in the context of all development co-operation between North and South.

The extent of the danger to which we are all exposed is obvious from the changes in the world's climate. The gap in the Earth's ozone layer is constantly widening. A commission appointed by the German Federal Republic Parliament came to the conclusion that a catastrophic deterioration of the Earth's climate can be avoided only if the present international agreements are drastically tightened up in the next few years and if the aerosols causing the damage to the ozone layer have been almost completely removed by the year 2000.

Over the past 20 years more than 3 million people have lost their lives as a result of natural disasters all over the world. More than 800 million people have suffered as a result of such disasters and damage to property has exceeded \$23 billion. The forty-second session of the General Assembly quite rightly proclaimed the last 10 years of the century the decade for disaster prevention.

The number of disasters afflicting mankind that do not have natural causes but are nature's reaction to its maltreatment by man is increasing all the time. The repair of damage resulting from such disasters must be complemented by preventive measures designed to ensure their early detection and mitigate their consequences. We already have the science and technology to achieve this, if only we can pool our efforts. This is a dictate of political and economic reason and applies to all

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members in the community of nations. The international community as a whole is responsible for the state of the Earth, which has been entrusted to us for safekeeping. The consequences of any aberrations affect us all.

Genetic engineering will soon give man the power to change himself. This poses the question of our self-perception as human beings, a question which no congress of biogenetic engineers, no State, but only mankind itself can answer. It therefore needs to be dealt with by the United Nations. Let us bring together the best and the wisest citizens of all nations so that they may tell us where man should set his own limits if he is not to betray himself, if he is not to abandon his dignity, his uniqueness.

We must set our minds to that task. It, too, calls for a new approach. The scientist accepts as a matter of course that there is a complex interdependence, an interaction of different elements and processes. Similarly, politics too must now be understood as the interaction of quite different people, States and systems with but one framework for their actions, the biosphere in which we live, and with one dimension of responsibility, which extends far beyond our age, embracing the survival of mankind and the fate of the whole of creation.

Let us erect a barrier against the maltreatment and destruction of creation. Because we all depend on the success of these efforts, we all depend on one another. This dependence compels all of us to desist from trying to dominate others, to desist from an arms race and to reject the arrogance of power and the egoism of the stronger.

West and East, North and South, must channel their energies into a new responsibility for this planet and for the future of mankind. We must no longer ask what our neighbours are doing to protect the Earth. We must ask what we ourselves can do, what can we do together. We need not despair in the face of this

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responsibility, which is unique in the history of mankind. We have no reason to be faint-hearted or despondent. As we face up to our responsibility for the future our best allies are the nations themselves. The people wish to live; they wish to live without fear; they wish to live without want. They will no longer allow themselves to be made objects of exploitation, oppression and power politics. They demand the chance to exercise their human rights, their civil, economic and social rights. The people are determined and inspired by the idea of their inalienable human dignity, the idea of freedom and the idea of peace. Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. The time has come. We must act now.

Mr. QIAN Qichen (China) (interpretation from Chinese): May I begin by congratulating you warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. I am sure that, with your remarkable ability and rich experience and the concerted efforts of representatives from various countries, this session will be a success. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, for his outstanding contribution in fulfilling the high mission of President of the last session.

When the forty-second session of the General Assembly opened here a year ago people already saw signs of relaxation in the prolonged international tension. Now, a year later, when we look at the world situation again, the trend towards relaxation is definitely gaining greater momentum. Some problems that have long been a cause of concern are heading towards solution. The Soviet-United States Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - signed last December after many years of negotiations, is being implemented.

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Agreement was finally reached in April this year on the Afghan question, which has been a cause of grave concern to the international community for more than eight years, and the Soviet troop withdrawal is now under way.

Another issue of grave international concern is the eight-year-long war between Iran and Iraq, but the situation has at last taken a favourable turn thanks to acceptance of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) by the two sides. The two countries have agreed to a cease-fire and are on the way to a negotiated peace.

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In south-west Africa, after long years of war and upheaval, the parties concerned have reached agreement in principle on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola and on the initial steps to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978) regarding the independence of Namibia. There have also been positive developments in the Horn of Africa, Western Sahara and the eastern Mediterranean. Efforts towards a settlement of the Middle East and Central American questions are also being made.

Dialogue is playing an increasingly prominent role in improving the international situation. There has been frequent dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union, and also fairly active dialogue between the parties concerned on questions of regional conflicts. In various regional organizations and conferences in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in the Non-Aligned Movement and in many bilateral contacts, countries are seeking settlement of international, regional or bilateral issues through dialogue. This year saw the first meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Balkan region, which was aimed at boosting co-operation among the Balkan countries. In order to ease the situation on the Korean peninsula and promote the peaceful reunification of Korea, the north and the south of Korea are making contacts. Facts show fully that in today's world dialogue is taking the place of confrontation, and the tendency to seek the peaceful settlement of international disputes is growing. This is a striking feature of the present international situation. Obviously, it is the outcome of the common efforts of all countries and is deeply rooted in the events of the time.

In the past 40 years or more since the Second World War history has made giant strides forward. The colonial system is now a thing of the past. Former colonies and dependencies have become sovereign States one after another and stand on their own feet in the family of nations. Respect for each other's independence and

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sovereignty and opposition to foreign aggression and oppression has become a most important feature in the international politics of the day. The power politics that prevailed in former days are becoming less and less operative. Facts have shown time and time again that even the super-Powers, which possess strength unmatched anywhere in the world, cannot conquer weaker and smaller nations by force and impose their will on others. All their attempts have inevitably failed because of the resolute resistance of the peoples subjected to aggression and the widespread condemnation by the international community. This is thought-provoking.

While the danger of war still exists, the forces of peace are steadily growing. People all over the world have voiced an increasingly strong demand for peace and against war. None of the third-world, East European or West European countries or other developed countries wants to go through the holocaust of another world war. Even the super-Powers, which possess sufficient nuclear armaments to destroy the Earth several times over, do not believe that they could win a nuclear war. All these factors have helped to check the outbreak of another world war.

Problems among developing countries ought to be settled through negotiation. Unfortunately, some differences have given rise to armed conflicts. There is a growing trend in developing countries towards seeking the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue. This indicates that they are becoming more and more aware that their major historical task is to develop their national economies and improve the quality of people's lives, and that armed conflicts among themselves can only deplete their national strength, to the detriment of their fundamental interests. War means mutual disaster, while peace brings mutual benefit. If the third-world countries handle their relations in this spirit, it will greatly hasten their development and enable them to play a more effective role in the cause of maintaining regional and global peace.

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Rapidly developing science and technology, which is being translated into unprecedentedly great productive forces, spurs the development of the economy and is changing the face of human society. This is a salient feature of the present era. The aggregate strength of a country depends more and more on its economic, scientific and technological level. A review of post-war history clearly indicates that countries which practise hegemonism and engage in the arms race, foreign expansion and military conflicts have found their national strength seriously weakened, while those countries which devote themselves to the development of science, technology, the economy and education have rapidly grown strong. Some have even risen in the world as great economic Powers with advanced science and technology. Meanwhile, the third world is very active in the international arena as a growing political force. Many regional political and economic organizations are also playing an ever more important part in international affairs. With the combination of these elements, the world is moving from bipolarization to multipolarization, which, in our view, is conducive to peace.

It is against such a backdrop that there emerges the trend of dialogue replacing confrontation and of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. These developments are a source of encouragement to the people of all countries.

However, is the present world free from troubles? Obviously it is not. The root cause of turbulence in the world has not yet been removed. The peoples of all countries must make unremitting efforts to safeguard world peace.

The world's peoples are faced with the common task of halting the arms race and striving for disarmament in order to preserve peace. The recently concluded third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament represented a major effort by the international community to push forward the process of disarmament. Although the special session failed to achieve specific results because of the rigid positions taken by one or two countries, in disregard

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of the reasonable demand of the vast majority of countries, the statements made by representatives of many countries and non-governmental organizations and the suggestions and propositions that they put forward mirrored the universal desire of the international community for peace and disarmament. The powerful public opinion arising therefrom has a positive impact on the promotion of the disarmament process. The special session enabled people to have a clearer picture of the present state of the arms race and the correct orientation of and approach to disarmament. On the question of disarmament, the Chinese delegation deems it necessary to expound the following three points at this session of the General Assembly.

First, it is a welcome development that the United States and the Soviet Union have taken a step forward on the road to disarmament. However, we cannot but note that the huge nuclear arsenals they possess still pose a threat to world peace. The arms race between them is still going on. They are trying greatly to improve and upgrade the quality and function of their respective nuclear weapons, vying with each other to develop high-tech weaponry and extending the arms race to outer space. Hence, the disarmament task remains arduous and formidable.

Secondly, countries across the world have repeatedly reaffirmed the important principle that the super-Powers, which possess the largest and most sophisticated arsenals, bear a special responsibility for disarmament and should take the lead in drastically cutting their arms. This is a correct direction and an effective approach for the realization of disarmament. We hope that the super-Powers will, in conformity with the trend of the times, quicken their pace on the road to disarmament and reach agreement on a drastic reduction of nuclear weapons at an early date, starting with a 50 per cent cut in strategic nuclear weapons. Their talks on conventional disarmament should also be speeded up and the arms race in outer space, in all its forms, should be halted.

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Thirdly, the question of disarmament concerns the security interests of all countries. Countries, big or small, strong or weak, all have the right to participate in the discussion and settlement of the disarmament question on an equal footing, and can each play a positive role. The super-Powers should respect and take seriously into consideration the reasonable demands and propositions set forth by the small and medium-sized countries. The United Nations and other multilateral disarmament agencies are important venues for the discussion and solution of this question by all parties on an equal basis. Their role should be strengthened. Multilateral and bilateral disarmament negotiations should complement and promote each other.

The third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament showed that most countries have identical or similar views on the aforementioned questions. We hope that the current session of the General Assembly will give full expression to the strong desire of these countries, and make significant progress towards disarmament.

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While there is greater effort to seek the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts through dialogue, the flames of war in quite a few conflict-ridden areas are yet to be extinguished. Dialogue on a number of issues has failed to make substantive progress. On some other issues, although agreements have been reached, the successful implementation of those agreements requires continued efforts by the parties concerned. In international relations the Chinese Government has all along advocated the observance of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. As regards regional conflicts, it has always stood for a fair and reasonable political settlement; therefore aggression must be stopped, foreign troops withdrawn and the sovereignty of all countries respected. Differences among developing countries should all the more be settled appropriately through peaceful negotiations on mutually acceptable terms.

The Chinese Government has consistently opposed Israel's policy of aggression and expansion and supported the just struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and the efforts of the Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to seek a solution to the Middle East question. We hope to see an early, fair and comprehensive solution to the question and an end to the turmoil caused by four decades of war, so that the people of the Middle East may enjoy peace again.

We are concerned about peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. China supports the reasonable proposition of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the independent and peaceful reunification of the country through consultation and dialogue and opposes any action that adds to tension on the peninsula.

Following the decision of the Soviet Union to pull out its troops from Afghanistan, the international community has voiced an even stronger demand for

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Vietnamese troop withdrawal from Kampuchea and for an end to the war of aggression. Regrettably, however, what the Vietnamese authorities have been doing runs counter to the desire and demand of the international community. While professing their readiness to withdraw their troops, they have put forward unreasonable demands in an attempt to delay their troop withdrawal and legalize the results of their aggression, so as to get what they have failed to achieve in their 10-year war of aggression. It should be stressed that on the Kampuchean question Viet Nam is the aggressor and the Vietnamese troops are the only foreign troops on Kampuchean territory. It is explicitly and solemnly stated in the very first Article of the United Nations Charter that to maintain international peace and security it is essential to take effective measures for the suppression of acts of aggression. Since the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the General Assembly has for nine successive years adopted resolutions calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea so as to facilitate the settlement of the Kampuchean problem by the Kampuchean people themselves, free from outside interference. All this shows that the international community brooks no legalization of the results of aggression. The Chinese Government considers it necessary for the current session of the General Assembly to reiterate those just demands and to uphold the sanctity of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Chinese Government has for the past decade worked hard towards a fair and reasonable settlement of the Kampuchean question. Recently it has further elaborated its position on the question, which can be summed up in the following five points.

First, a complete withdrawal by Viet Nam of its troops from Kampuchea is the key to a settlement of the Kampuchean question. The Vietnamese side should produce, as soon as possible, a timetable for its troop withdrawal from Kampuchea within a short period of time.

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Secondly, we favour the establishment, with Prince Norodom Sihanouk in charge, of a provisional quadripartite coalition government in Kampuchea as Viet Nam withdraws its troops from the country. Each faction's candidates for the provisional government should be proposed by the faction itself but should be acceptable to the other parties concerned. We stand for a quadripartite coalition in Kampuchea. We are against the exclusion of any of the four factions from it or the exercise of power by any one faction alone.

Thirdly, upon the establishment of the provisional quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea, a freeze should be imposed on the activities of the Kampuchean armed forces of all factions. They should refrain from becoming involved in politics and interfering in the general election, so that the Kampuchean people may conduct a free election in the absence of outside interference and the threat of force. To prevent a civil war in Kampuchea the existing armed forces of all factions might be disbanded, to facilitate the creation of a unified national defence force composed of an equal number of officers and men from each of the four factions, under a unified command.

Fourthly, practical and effective international supervision should be instituted over Viet Nam's troop withdrawal, the maintenance of peace in Kampuchea and the conduct of a free election there. To that end the Chinese Government supports the proposition for the sending to Kampuchea of an international peace-keeping force and an international control committee.

Fifthly, when the parties concerned have reached agreement on a political settlement of the Kampuchean question, China will be ready to join other countries in an international guarantee for an independent, neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea.

It must be clear to all that China seeks no self-interest in Kampuchea as in any other region of the world. The Chinese Government's position is based entirely on the principle of opposing aggression, upholding justice and safeguarding the

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United Nations Charter and the norms governing international relations. It is our hope that the international community will continue to work under this principle for a fair and just settlement of the Kampuchean question.

We should attach adequate importance to world economic problems while paying attention to the international political situation. The current world economic development is extremely uneven, despite the presence of a few positive factors. Worrisome problems still exist and some have even gone from bad to worse. While developed countries have enjoyed economic growth for six successive years, developing countries have suffered severe economic setbacks. Many of them have witnessed increasing signs of stagnation in the process of development. The economic difficulties of African countries have aroused wide concern. The heavy debt burden, reduced inflow of funds, worsening trade terms and growing protectionism have all seriously hampered the economic growth of developing countries. All this demonstrates that present international economic relations are becoming increasingly out of accord with the needs of economic growth in the world and of developing countries in particular.

In the present-day world there is even greater economic interdependence among countries. Developed countries will find it difficult to sustain their economic growth if developing countries long remain in difficulties and their economies cannot move ahead. It is an urgent task in the international economic sphere to improve, by effective measures, the external environment of developing countries in such fields as commodities, trade, debt, capital, currency and finance. That would contribute not only to resumed growth and development of developing countries but also to the stability and growth of the world economy. Recently the Group of 77 has proposed the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to economic matters. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, has also proposed a summit meeting similar to the Cancun

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Meeting. The Chinese Government seconds those proposals and hopes to see increased North-South co-operation through dialogue and the invigoration of the world economy.

Over the past few years, regional economic co-operation has increased markedly, which is an important trend in international economic relations. We believe that regional co-operation based on equality and mutual benefit is of positive significance, for it helps the development of different regions. At the same time I should like to emphasize that in the present world economic conditions neither a country nor a region can achieve development and prosperity behind closed doors. It has to open itself to the outside world. Trade protectionism, while harming others, is in the final analysis detrimental to the initiator as well. It is our hope that countries and regions across the world will open up to and complement one another, to the benefit of their common development and prosperity.

As there is growing regional co-operation in the world, co-operation and development in the Asia-Pacific region have attracted more and more attention in recent years. This region is indeed making rapid economic progress and has tremendous potential. However, the development level varies with different countries in the region, where many countries remain underdeveloped or even impoverished. As a large country in the region, China supports regional economic co-operation. China's development is closely linked with that of the Asia-Pacific region. We hope to see closer co-operation and the common prosperity of all countries in the region.

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China will implement unswervingly the policy of deepening reform and wider opening to the outside world. It is opening itself to the whole world, including the developed and developing countries, countries whose social systems are similar to or different from the system of China. Recently, we have adopted new measures in an effort to restructure our foreign trade and improve our investment environment. Most important, we have mapped out an economic development strategy for China's coastal regions. Those regions, which cover an area of about 320,000 square kilometres with a population of 160 million, boast a better infrastructure, greater economic and technological strength and higher quality of labour force. Accelerating their opening-up and strengthening their multifaceted, multichannel and multiform economic and technological co-operation with the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world will not only speed up China's economic development but also make positive contributions to the prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and that of the world as a whole.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Forty years ago the people and Governments of various countries that had suffered from the catastrophe of the two world wars worked out and adopted that Declaration through their joint efforts. It is the first international instrument that systematically and specifically sets forth respect for and protection of fundamental human rights. Despite its historical limitations, the Declaration has exerted a far-reaching influence on the development of post-war international human rights activities and has played a positive role in that regard. In the past four decades the concept of human rights has continuously developed, and its content has been enriched and its theory improved. A series of subsequent declarations and conventions concerning human rights has further developed and stipulated in detail the specific content of each

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

human right. In this connection particular mention should be made of such important items as the right to national self-determination, the right to racial equality, the permanent sovereign right over natural wealth and resources and the right to development. All those are of great significance to the fight for equality, freedom and liberation waged by the nations and peoples under the apartheid system or foreign aggression and oppression, to the efforts made by countries newly independent in the post-war period to preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity and to the demands of the developing countries for restructuring the irrational international economic situation. The Chinese Government has always appreciated and supported the United Nations efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Three years ago, from this solemn rostrum, the Chinese leader Zhao Ziyang pointed out that the world needs the United Nations, while the United Nations needs the support of the world. Events have repeatedly testified to that important thesis. With the passage of time the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which are increasingly recognized as norms governing international relations and as an embodiment of the lofty ideals of mankind, are playing an ever greater role in the international community.

Despite its inadequacies the United Nations is irreplaceable in its role as the most broadly representative and most influential international organization in the world. Gone are the days when a few big Powers could manipulate world affairs. The United Nations is the proper forum in which countries meet to discuss world affairs. It has proved itself capable of doing important work, and it has great potential for solving questions facing mankind, questions such as those of the environment, population, public health and scientific and technological

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

development. Above all, it should be pointed out that in recent years the Security Council and the Secretary-General, with the support of Member States, must be credited with achievements in promoting the settlement of major international disputes. Here, I want to present my compliments to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and to wish him continued successes in his peace mission. The importance of the United Nations role is on the rise, in keeping with the expectations of our time. The people of the world expect the United Nations to play a greater role in maintaining world peace, in spurring development and in strengthening international co-operation. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China is ready to continue to work with other Member States for the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Sir Geoffrey HOWE (United Kingdom): Sir, may I offer you my congratulations on taking up the presidency of the General Assembly and send my warm thanks to the outgoing President, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic.

This has been a year of unprecedented natural disaster. No outsider can fully share the tragedy of the flooding in Bangladesh. The hurricane devastation in the Caribbean and Mexico has horrified us all. From South Asia, through Africa, to the Caribbean and even to the grain belt of America, we have seen destruction on a scale rarely equalled before.

Last week I was in Africa. I went first to the Sudan. I saw there the devastation caused by the recent floods and the brave efforts of the Sudanese Government and people to cope with that crisis. I visited a refugee camp of 500 tents supplied by Britain, made in Malta. Alongside them were tents from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Nations from all over the world had come to Sudan's aid. The

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

following day I flew to Kenya, where pictures of the famine and suffering in southern Sudan were front-page news in the Nairobi press.

The tragedies that have been occurring this year are seen and felt by people in towns and cities around the globe, and the world community has responded with rarely equalled sympathy and generosity. My own country alone has this year contributed some £80 million to disaster relief around the world. The total contributed by the Western democracies is likely to have been at least 10 times that amount.

These immediate natural disasters are a poignant reminder of the need to tackle an issue that is of longer term but crucial for us all: the health of our planet as a whole. Some of its present transformation is good. Its resources are being better used for the benefit of mankind. But other elements are leading to a progressive pollution of the land, the sea and the air.

There has already been some disruption of natural patterns. Damage to the ozone layer, first identified by the British Antarctic Survey in 1985, caused instant international alarm. That concern has already led to agreement to limit the production of certain industrial chemicals.

The possibility of climatic change caused by the increase in the greenhouse gases, leading to a global heat trap, has become a real concern. The increases predicted in global temperatures would have substantial effects, within the next few decades, on life and human society. Even small variations would have great consequences in a crowded world.

We are totally dependent on climate. Damage it beyond repair, and the earth becomes a lifeless desert spinning in space. We cannot leave a problem of this magnitude to technical bodies. Britain is among those who have pressed for a serious debate on the subject within the United Nations. Last year we welcomed the

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

Brundtland report, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. We want to carry forward its work. So we welcome the forthcoming discussion in the Second Committee. The problem must command an urgent place on the world agenda.

It is in the face of natural disaster that we are made most vividly aware of the fragility and interdependence of human existence. Faced with the enormity of the difficulties, the speed and universality of response are extraordinary.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

Yet sadly, in the face of man-made disasters we have not so far been able to respond in such a united and effective way. Their causes are more complex, their effects are equally devastating, and they too demand our utmost and our urgent energy and ingenuity. This year we have broken the pattern of the past by applying the principles of the Charter to the resolution of a lengthy and bloody dispute, the conflict between Iran and Iraq.

Each one of us here is committed, bindingly committed, to the Charter of the United Nations: not just to words on a page, but to fundamental principles of justice and international law. It was those principles that I had in mind when I spoke here a year ago at the height of the Iran-Iraq war. I said then:

"The blunt truth is that the way in which the United Nations handles the conflict between Iran and Iraq must have a decisive effect upon its reputation in the eyes of all the peoples whom we represent." (A/42/PV.8, p. 58)

I called then for a degree of unity which the international community had rarely been able to achieve, and a year later the scene that then seemed so dark and hopeless has been lighted by the united efforts of the international community.

Many factors have helped to foster this change: the realization by Iran and Iraq that war to the death would mean mutual destruction; the spirit and resolve of the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff; and, perhaps above all, the part played by the Security Council and its five permanent members.

The permanent members are given a unique power under the Charter. That power, the power of veto, carries with it a special responsibility, a responsibility that has rarely been exercised. But the last year has witnessed the development of a new co-operation among the five. It began tentatively; it was pursued pragmatically; but it was born of principle as well as pragmatism, of a combined determination to do all we could together to bring an end to the devastation of a senseless war.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

That determination, coupled with the skill, patience and persistence of the Secretary-General, culminated in the successful achievement of a cease-fire. Now the action has switched from the battleground to the negotiating table, from the banks of the Tigris to the banks of the East River.

The Secretary-General must be allowed to build on the cease-fire so as to arrange the withdrawal of forces and the repatriation of prisoners of war. The framework for peace is Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which provides for negotiations under the auspices of the Security Council. Britain will do all in its power to sustain the spirit of co-operation and to contribute to a peaceful settlement.

If the international community can find a way forward on the dispute between Iran and Iraq it cannot ignore the plight of the Kurds, driven from their homes not by natural disaster but by unnatural force and brutality. The containment of conflict in one form must not lead to its prosecution in another.

The charge that Iraq has used chemical weapons against the Kurds adds gravity to the situation. Under Security Council resolution 620 (1988), the Secretary-General can conduct a prompt and independent inquiry. The need for such an inquiry is evident. The refusal of Iraq to co-operate in such an inquiry is all the more to be deplored, because the spread of chemical weapons is one of the most disturbing of recent developments.

As more countries develop a chemical-weapons capability, the risk of the increased use of these weapons as an instrument of war and terror multiplies. It is for that reason that Britain has taken a lead in preparing an international convention for the world-wide suppression of chemical weapons and in pressing the crucial case for greater openness in this field. Nowhere is glasnost more necessary. At the special session in June I made important proposals to strengthen the international standards of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. So today I welcome

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

President Reagan's proposal to reconvene the 1925 Geneva Conference to mobilize the international community behind the search for a convention on chemical weapons which would outlaw their use.

Co-operation on the resolution of the Iran-Iraq conflict has been unique. But it must not be the only example of the constructive exercise of shared responsibility among the permanent members of the Security Council. There are grounds for hoping that will not be the case, for we have also been witnessing this year a change in the atmosphere which increases the scope for such co-operation.

East-West relations themselves have moved on to a new footing. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the Washington and Moscow summits and the Moscow Party Conference have all been remarkable in their separate ways.

Perhaps just as significant has been the recent acknowledgement by Mr. Shevardnadze that foreign policy is no longer to be seen in Moscow as a special form of class struggle. "The struggle between the opposing systems", he said, "is no longer a determining tendency of the present era". I believe that most of the members of this Assembly will say "amen" to that.

No longer, to paraphrase Clausewitz, need foreign policy be the continuation of class warfare by other means.

Even so, progress on arms-control talks would not have been made without the constant and united determination of the members of the North Atlantic alliance. Of course we want to see success in the negotiations between Washington and Moscow for a reduction in strategic weapons, but we want to see early progress as well in cutting the conventional imbalances in Europe, which prejudice the security of millions of people.

Arms-control negotiations no longer bear the full burden of East-West relations. They remain a vital component in the creation of a climate of

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

confidence. So too does the search for a world-wide pattern of respect for human rights and freedom. In Europe we look for further progress in this regard from an early conclusion of the Vienna Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The fundamental principle, which we have long proclaimed and which Mr. Shevardnadze endorsed in his statement yesterday, is that the rule of law and the right of the individual to determine his own future are inseparable.

More widely than that, if we can establish confidence in East-West relations we can harness energies which have too often pulled in different directions, and put them to constructive work. The place to do that is the United Nations.

There are many tasks, many regional conflicts, but also growing signs that progress is possible.

Recent developments over Afghanistan are one example. Eight years after its forces invaded Afghanistan the Soviet Union has finally begun to take them home. Over half have now left. This may well reflect a new realism in Moscow, but it is also a consequence of the courage and determination of the Afghan people and of the sustained and overwhelming support of this General Assembly. Tens of thousands of Afghans have died. Millions have been driven from their homes. That is why we now look forward to the complete and prompt withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Afghan people as a whole must then be given the chance to select a truly representative government by a genuine act of self-determination. Only then can Afghanistan start to live again.

It is possible now to perceive as well that universal condemnation of Viet Nam's illegal occupation of Cambodia is also having its effect. Britain was among the first to insist that Viet Nam must withdraw from Cambodia unconditionally and quickly. Viet Nam cannot by itself sustain its occupation; its own economy is in ruins.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

One consequence of Viet Nam's policy has been the huge exodus of its own people in boats to Hong Kong and other destinations. It is time for this tragic migration to cease, time for Viet Nam to take back its own people in humane fashion. Hong Kong's policy of seeking to return those people who are not genuine refugees is the only way to cope with what would otherwise be an unmanageable influx.

We also think the time is now right to look closely at ways of promoting a settlement in Cambodia. The aim should be to secure the early and unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and a political settlement to give Cambodia a stable and secure Government. That must by definition preclude a return to the horrors of the Pol Pot régime.

Just as in the Gulf one resolution of the Security Council offers the prospect of peace, so in southern Africa another resolution offers similar hope of a peaceful end to an old dispute. Ten years ago tomorrow, Security Council resolution 435 (1978) was adopted. It remains the best framework for independence for Namibia.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

The first crucial step has been taken in South Africa's withdrawal from Angola and the establishment of an effective cease-fire. The next task is to achieve the withdrawal of South African forces from Namibia; and all Cuban forces from Angola and free elections in Namibia, leading to independence. That will require enormous ingenuity, perseverance and compromise.

It will require from South Africa a new respect for the integrity of its independent neighbours. We hope the recent reaffirmation of the Nkomati accord represents a commitment by South Africa to the stability of the region as a whole.

It will require from Angola a determined effort to achieve reconciliation within Angola, where the Cuban presence has helped to make an international issue of what is essentially a matter for internal resolution.

Just as Security Council resolution 435 (1978) has stood the test of time, so too has the British Government's commitment to act in its support. We long ago offered to provide a signals unit to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). We remain ready to play our part, and are ready, with our partners in the European Community, to offer assistance to an independent Namibia.

A settlement in Angola and the independence of Namibia would not in themselves resolve the intractable problems of South Africa. The principle at stake there is a simple one: the liberty and dignity of the individual. We are committed to the abolition of the system of apartheid, which stifles liberty and denies dignity. We have to find the lever that will effect that change. We do not believe that comprehensive sanctions are that lever. Some see sanctions as a political gesture which should be made almost for its own sake, but it would be an empty gesture. It would be a gesture with too high a price attached: too high a price in terms of the millions of black jobs, black livelihoods, which would be at stake.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

Our goal is the same as that of our friends in Africa. We are doing all we can to bring apartheid to an end.

Our aid to South Africa's neighbours since 1980 is worth well over £1 billion). We supply defence assistance to Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The Limpopo railway is being repaired with British help and defended by Mozambican troops trained in Zimbabwe by British army officers.

We give aid to black groups and individuals within South Africa so that they can educate themselves, build their own enterprises and free themselves from the oppression of apartheid.

In southern Africa, the parties to a longstanding dispute seem at last to be seeking agreement within the framework of a Security Council resolution.

The principles of a settlement in the Middle East were similarly laid down in a Security Council resolution 21 years ago. They are no less valid today. Both Israel and the Palestinians have a historic sense of injustice. That injustice is aggravated, not alleviated, by terrorist attacks against Israel. And the violent suppression of Palestinian aspirations jeopardizes the search for a peaceful settlement.

The international community cannot afford to give up the search for peace. The need for an international conference involving the five permanent members of the Security Council is more vital than ever. We shall be persistent in our efforts to help create the conditions in which such a conference can be held.

In Western Sahara, we have seen the two sides to a dispute brought together by the commendable efforts of the Secretary-General. They have accepted that a referendum is the only way of resolving their differences.

I hope that this new willingness to seek peaceful solutions will prove contagious.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

Regarding one dispute with which Britain itself is concerned, let me just say one thing: the right of the Falkland islanders to self-determination cannot be compromised, but my country will continue energetically to seek ways of restoring more normal relations with Argentina.

Regional disputes around the world are by no means all or even the worst of our problems today. Conflicts within a nation pose some of the most complicated and intractable problems facing the international community. Often they are at a level deeper than a dispute between one nation State and the next. Often they escape the procedures and the mechanisms by which we are accustomed to operate. Yet the way in which they dislocate the very fabric of nationhood is itself a cause of tension and a challenge for the international community.

The tragedy of the Lebanon is an example of such subnational conflict that divides a country down the middle and at the same time extends beyond its borders. We can think of other examples. Earlier this month, in Sudan, I saw the tragic consequences of an internal conflict unresolved. And the conflict in Ethiopia has exacerbated the horrors of famine and starvation in that country.

In Burma, we have been appalled at the killing of unarmed demonstrators, women and children, which has taken place over the past three months. Such violence will solve nothing. The Burmese authorities must recognize that the only way to a lasting solution to the country's internal crisis lies in meeting the desire of the Burmese people for greater freedom and multi-party democracy.

This type of internal problem poses particular difficulties for the international community. We must work hard to find answers.

I welcome the resumption of the peace process in Cyprus. The Secretary-General has met the leaders of the two communities on the island. Agreement has been reached on negotiating a just and lasting settlement by 1 June next year.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

As we meet here, another international event is under way on the far side of the world. In Seoul, in Korea, the hosting of the Olympic Games is a tribute to the remarkable political and economic progress made in that country. We welcome the recent contacts between North and South: we hope that they will contribute to the improvement in atmosphere that will one day lead to the Korean people being properly represented with us here in this institution.

We can extend our co-operation into new areas to deal with new challenges to international peace and stability, challenges which postdate the creation of the United Nations itself.

The battle against international terrorism is one such. Following the hijacking of KU 422 in April, Britain launched an initiative which led to an agreement in the International Civil Aviation Organization on the detaining of hijacked aircraft so as to contain the spreading of a hijack crisis from one country to another. We must build on that measure to strengthen international protection against future hijackings.

The evil of drug-related crime also challenges us to a united response. In some parts of the world the malevolent forces of drug trafficking do as much damage as traditional armed conflict. Individually, many nations may feel they are victims of forces beyond their control. Together, the international community has a power immeasurably greater than the greatest threat. We must create powerful weapons for ourselves, above all by denying the use of the financial system to those that profit from this trade and by preventing funds from being ploughed back into that trade, through co-operation to seize drug traffickers' assets wherever they are. My own country has adopted legal powers to help do this. We cannot act alone. We urge the international community to consider similar action.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

With the terrorist, the hijacker, the drug trafficker, we have to find ways of directly attacking the environment which sustains him. We must deny him the life support of finance or the comfort of a bolt hole on the other side of a frontier. Drugs and terror are partners in crime. We must be partners within this Organization in fighting them.

We must be partners, too, in fighting afflictions which are not man-made but which require human resource to solve. When AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) first started, there was a tendency to put up moral barricades, maximize blame and minimize action. Now we know better. In January, Ministers of Health from all over the world met in London to discuss the problem openly, compare our experience and co-operate in finding solutions. In the face of such disparate and complex issues it is not always easy for the international community to act. None the less, the greater the degree of unity we can display, the greater our chances of finding solutions.

In the face of such disparate and complex issues it is not always easy for the international community to act. None the less, the greater the degree of unity we can display, the greater our chances of finding solutions. I am convinced that we can go further together.

I began by speaking about my recent visit to Africa and of how different countries, helped by the international community, are coping with man-made as well as natural hazards. In each of the five African countries I visited I was enormously conscious of the economic problems with which they are grappling. Their experience is mirrored in other continents.

(Sir Geoffrey Howe, United Kingdom)

So we warmly welcomed the positive conclusion last weekend of the meeting under United Nations auspices which reviewed the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. We will continue to do all we can to help. We can now build further on our partnership with the countries concerned.

Disparities between rich and poor cannot be reduced overnight. It will be a long process. Aid can help. So, too, can the creation of more open conditions for international trade, and likewise internal economic reform, within the framework of structural adjustment and with adequate support from other countries. That is the importance of relieving the burden of debt on those least able to bear it. These are all matters in which Britain will continue to play a prominent, and in many respects a catalytic, role.

The proposals on debt relief which we launched over a year ago are now coming to fruition. This opens the way for a number of countries to benefit from rescheduling on concessional terms before the end of the year. But in the last resort it is the Governments and peoples of the countries concerned that must work out their own destiny. We support their own strong determination to that end and we will work to sustain our own partnership with them.

There is a new spirit throughout the world in seeking to live up to the undertakings which we have all given under the United Nations Charter. There is a new resolve to put this Organization to work for our common good. We must sustain that spirit and that resolve in the year ahead.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.