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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 6 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. CAFUTO

(Argentina)

later:

Mr. Dias da Graça
(Vice-President)

(Sao Tome and Principe)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Abu Salih (Sudan)

Mr. Savetsila (Thailand)

Address by Mr. Sotsha Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland

Statements made by:

Mr. Filali (Morocco)

Mr. Habibou (Niger)

Mr. Jameel (Maldives)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ABU SALIH (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, our warm congratulations on your election as President of the current session of the General Assembly, which reflects the confidence of the international community in your skill, long experience and well-known wisdom, and is also an expression of appreciation of your friendly country. We are confident that you will lead the work of the session to achievement of the positive results we all hope for.

I would also express my delegation's deep appreciation of the skill and competence with which your predecessor served as President of the last session of the General Assembly.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Secretary-General on his valuable report on the work of the Organization and efforts in support of international peace and security.

This year the world has witnessed important events and developments which have great significance for the efforts aimed at strengthening international peace and security. It has also witnessed serious natural disasters that have inflicted grave damage on the infrastructures of a number of countries and impeded their efforts to achieve development and progress.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

In this context, I would like to recall the Treaty between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, as well as other agreements reached by the two countries at the Washington and Moscow summit meetings of 1987 and 1988, respectively. These developments came as an expression of the peaceful approach adopted by the two super-Powers, the policy of détente, and the improvement of the international climate, and also as an indication of the beginning of the movement towards disarmament and the reduction of risk of a nuclear war. While welcoming these steps towards peace, we call on both countries to continue to move in that direction, and we hope to see this policy of reconciliation applied in solving regional and world problems, eradicating racial discrimination and promoting respect for peoples' rights to independence and sovereignty.

Among the most outstanding issues that should be given more attention by the super-Powers and the United Nations are the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, which increasingly endanger international peace and security because of Israel's defiance of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and of the unanimous will of the international community, resulting in its savage acts of terrorism against the defenceless Palestinian people.

Peace can never be achieved in the Middle East region unless it is based on the principle of absolute justice. The question of Palestine is the origin and crux of the conflict in the region. Therefore Israel must unconditionally withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem. In this respect, we reiterate the importance of holding the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

The uprising of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has continued, for almost a year, to cause the loss of life of many martyrs, who have fallen under the fire of Israeli terrorism and occupation. The militant Palestinian people has proven once more that its resolve will not be weakened and that its determination will increase even more, even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices, due to Israeli terrorism. My delegation wishes therefore, from this rostrum, to commend the struggle and brave resolution of the "stone" children. They have brought an ingenious innovation to the struggle of the Palestinian people and, with unique courage and unwavering determination have exposed the machinery and power of the systematic terrorism pursued by the Tel Aviv government. This people will inevitably triumph, however great the sacrifices may be.

We view with deep appreciation the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to restore peace and to end the war between Iraq and Iran, efforts which culminated in the recent cease-fire. We sincerely hope that the negotiations currently under way will succeed and pave the way to a permanent, comprehensive, peaceful settlement of the conflict between the two countries.

The situation in southern Africa is another source of grave concern. The people in that area are still suffering under the yoke of domination and the abhorrent apartheid régime, which is the most rapacious, fascist and racist colonial system. Despite international condemnation, the apartheid régime still persists in its crimes against world conscience and humanity. We salute the people of South Africa for their relentless struggle to attain their legitimate rights and achieve their just demands under the leadership of their legitimate representatives, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

The apartheid régime is an affront to humanity. We call upon the international community to help eradicate it by increasing its isolation and by carrying out comprehensive economic sanctions. We also call for support for the efforts that are being made to achieve Namibia's independence and to strengthen the means of implementing the United Nations resolutions aimed at putting an end to Namibia's illegal occupation by South Africa and at supporting the struggle of its people for liberation and sovereignty under the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), their legitimate and sole representative.

We hope that the continuing efforts that are being made in the current negotiations to achieve a practical solution that would benefit the Namibian people, on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1987), will succeed, so that an end may be put to Namibia's illegal occupation by Pretoria, that Namibia may be granted its independence and that favourable conditions may be created for the achievement of this objective.

The Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan signed last April are outstanding achievements on the road to establishing peace and reaching a comprehensive settlement of the problem of Afghanistan. We hope that the national reconciliation endeavours currently under way will bear fruit, so that Afghanistan and its people may enjoy security and stability.

The success of the United Nations endeavours inspires the hope that peace and security may be attained in other regions of the world. Cambodia still awaits a comprehensive, just and peaceful solution, one that would involve the withdrawal of all foreign forces from its territories and would help create a favourable climate that would enable the Cambodian people to exercise their right to independence and sovereignty.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

We hope to see the Korean people attain their aspirations and reunite their homeland in peace and without foreign interference.

We also hope that political, economic and social stability will be achieved by the peoples of Central America.

Mr. President, we support what you said in your statement concerning the increasing effectiveness of the United Nations in arriving at a new pattern of international relations based on the belief that the force of arms, however strong, will not solve the problems of the world.

The developments the world has witnessed this year have proved the effectiveness of the United Nations and its ability to contribute to the strengthening of peace and stability. We would like in this context to commend the Secretary-General for his wise leadership and efforts to achieve the goals of the United Nations. We congratulate the United Nations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its peace-keeping operations. We call upon Member States to respect the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.

My country is following with deep concern the exacerbation of the acute crisis in the present international economic order and the negative impact on developing countries, especially the least developed among them. No one can deny the fact that the roots of the crisis lie in the continuation of structural imbalances in the international economic order. This is evident in the decline of the terms of international trade, the decrease in the prices of raw materials exported by developing countries, and the exacerbation of the foreign debt crisis to such an extent that it is now threatening the future of all economic and social development. It also has political and social implications arising from the stagnation of the rates of growth and the decrease in the flow of development assistance. We would like in this context to mention in particular the tardiness of

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

developed countries in fulfilling their obligations to implement resolutions on the International Development Strategy for the second and third development decades, which call upon those countries to allocate .07 per cent of their national income as official assistance for the financing of development in developing countries. The situation is also aggravated by the failure of developed countries to adhere to the decisions contained in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, despite the international consensus reached at the Paris Conference in 1980, which resulted in a serious set-back to economic development in the States of this group.

The foreign debt crisis in developing countries has begun to assume serious dimensions, posing a major obstacle to the economic and social development of developing countries in general, and of the least developed countries in particular. We are convinced that the crisis is caused mainly by the structural imbalances in the present international economic order.*

* Mr. Dias da Graça (Sao Tome and Principe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

The debt-servicing burden is worsening daily and giving rise to grave dangers as a result of the wrong policies being imposed by some international financial institutions, the stagnation of official development assistance, protectionism, the closure of markets to the exports of developing countries, and the instability of financial markets. This deterioration endangers not only the stability and security of developing countries, but also international stability and security. Therefore, my country would like to appeal from this rostrum for urgent international action to deal with the foreign debt crisis on a complete, comprehensive and systematic basis, taking into account the importance of recognizing the principle of the common responsibility of both developing and developed countries, and the necessity of dealing with the debt crisis within a comprehensive international strategy.

In this context, my delegation wishes to mention some positive signs at the international level, in particular the increasing awareness of the necessity of finding urgent and just solutions to the debt problem. In this vein, my delegation commends and welcomes the decisions taken at the industrial nations' summit meeting, held in Toronto, Canada, last June. Those decisions contained the first clear and explicit consensus among the major industrial nations on the importance of taking practical and concrete steps towards alleviating the debt burden of the poorest countries, especially those of Africa. In particular we would recall the recommendation calling for the writing off of the debts of poor African countries, which we believe would constitute an extremely important step towards containing this serious crisis.

The critical economic situation in Africa also causes deep concern. The already grave economic crisis in Africa that has resulted from several external and internal factors has been exacerbated by natural disasters such as drought, desertification and floods.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

In this context my delegation expresses total support for implementation of the decisions contained in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which was unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session in May 1986. We observe with regret that several developed countries have failed to fulfil their obligations concerning the implementation of decisions contained in the Programme of Action, especially in the area of providing financial resources to finance development, as clearly shown in the medium-term evaluation of the African Programme of Action at the meetings of the Committee of the Whole held last month in this Hall. My delegation expresses its full support for the recommendations of the Committee of the Whole on the medium-term evaluation of the African Programme of Action and appeals to the developed countries to fulfil their obligations in order to secure the success of common efforts before 1990.

My delegation stresses its firm belief in the principle of interdependence and organic integrity of the international economic order for the benefit of all, which can only be achieved through the devising of full and comprehensive solutions based on the principles of equality, justice and equitable opportunities. Accordingly, the activation of constructive dialogue between developing and developed countries constitutes an urgent and vital demand at this critical juncture, at which the international community faces major dangers and challenges which require wisdom, courage, clarity of vision and political will. We believe that the gravity of the present international economic crisis requires the intensification of efforts to devise a complete strategy, to reopen the channels of North-South dialogue in order to restructure the present international economic order, and to establish a new international economic order with a view to accelerating economic and social development in developing countries within the framework of interdependence and common benefit.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

The people of the Sudan have confirmed their determination to uphold the democratic option by establishing a national-accord Government which is a clear manifestation of the unanimous will of the people. That Government is supported by 90 per cent of the members of the Constituent Assembly. Its support is also rooted in a wide popular base, and is based on the rule of law, judiciary independence, freedom of expression and association, and respect for human and fundamental rights.

The Sudan is not content with absolute-majority democracy; it transcends that, aspiring to reach the goal of total national unity through integral conciliation by accommodating the minority. Thus, the Sudan called for a constitutional conference attended by all political forces to discuss questions and problems in order to reach solutions by peaceful means. Accordingly, the Sudan adopted a consistent position vis-à-vis the rebellion movement in the south, based on inviting it to enter into a dialogue instead of fighting.

The Government's peaceful initiatives coincided with efforts to improve relations with neighbouring countries on the basis of the Sudan's foreign policy principles - that is, commitment to international and regional covenants, respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and pursuing a policy of maintaining good relations with its neighbours.

On the basis of those firm principles of our foreign policy, we moved to conduct more serious dialogue with our friendly neighbour Ethiopia in order to solve problems between our two countries and promote prospects for co-operation, with a view to establishing more stability in the region. We even aspire to making the whole region of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa a secure and peaceful place far from the rivalries and conflicts of the great Powers.

My country is now faced with extremely difficult economic conditions. It is

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

earnestly trying to cope with them through a four-year programme for salvation, rehabilitation and development and the formulation of strict substantive policies to restore balance and enable the economy to advance in a negative international economic climate. The Assembly is well aware of the adverse effects of that climate on the economies of the developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

Moreover, we have been faced with great challenges and successive natural disasters. Our country, as the Assembly is aware, is host to more than 1 million refugees, due to my Government's commitment to international and regional covenants which regulate refuge. However, the burden of hosting refugees, given our country's complicated economic circumstances, which I have indicated, has surpassed our absorptive capacity and adversely affected our economic and developmental environment and efforts. The Assembly made reference to this in its resolution 42/129 by emphasizing the heavy burden on the people and Government of the Sudan and the serious social and economic impact caused by the presence of large numbers of refugees and its effect on development and infrastructure.

In this context, I should like to renew our thanks and appreciation for the generous appeal made by the General Assembly to the international community last March to render immediate assistance to my country in order to enable it to cope with the increasing consequences of hosting increasing numbers of refugees. We also thank the Secretary-General for the joint missions he sent to the Sudan. It gives me pleasure to express our appreciation for the reports and recommendations which these missions have presented to the General Assembly.

We hope that at this session the General Assembly will be able to study the important proposal included in the Secretary-General's report (A/41/264) which calls for the establishment of a new group constituted of the States called

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

"refugee affected countries", and that those States can obtain preferential treatment as regards international developmental aid.

Apart from the refugee crisis, my country has been exposed to a wide migratory movement from the south to the north as a result of the rebellion movement, which is increasingly supported from outside the country. My Government strives to provide those migrants with shelter, food, education and medical treatment.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

The United Nations and the international community have been helping us deal with this formidable disaster, which involved the migration of more than 1 million persons to the north and a consequent burden in terms of refugees. Even as that help was being tendered my country fell victim last August to a serious disaster caused by torrential rain and flooding, resulting in huge losses and the destruction of roads, railways, farms, houses, public facilities, communications systems and power networks. More than 2 million individuals lost their houses in Khartoum and the northern province.

Before these torrential rains and flooding ended, wide areas of the Sudan were invaded by locusts, posing a genuine threat to agriculture and the environment not only in the Sudan but in all the States of the region.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our sister States and Governments and to non-governmental organizations for their help in providing relief for the victims. At the same time, we hope that support will continue beyond the time of emergency to consolidate our efforts to rebuild infrastructure, public facilities and various projects concerned with production. In that connection, we consider it necessary to conduct studies of the increase in natural disasters, to which a number of speakers have referred. Studies have shown that in the 1960s disasters claimed 5 million victims; they claimed 15 million in the 1970s, and that figure has doubled before the end of the 1980s. I hope that phenomenon will prompt the United Nations and the entire international community to study the question seriously, to reconsider the performance of existing machinery, and to devise the best practical means and efficient methods and machinery to handle such disasters.

We hope also that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its last session, which declared the 1990s as the international decade for natural disaster

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reduction, with a view to enhancing international co-operation in this field, will help consolidate ongoing efforts to confront these increasing disasters more effectively.

Finally, I should like to reiterate our confidence in the United Nations and its leadership and in its capability to make an active contribution to strengthening international peace and security. Its achievements have confirmed its credibility and effectiveness as an invincible fortress of peace, prosperity and progress for the human race in line with the purposes and the spirit of the Charter.

Mr. SAVETSILO (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of Thailand, and on my own behalf, I should like to convey to Mr. Dante Caputo our warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. As relations between Argentina and Thailand have been and continue to be very close, his election to his high office is a source of gratification for my country. We are confident that his great wisdom, vast experience and proven diplomatic ability will ensure that the Assembly will conduct its work in an effective manner, leading to the fruitful conclusion of this important session.

I should also like to pay a tribute to His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin, President of the Assembly at its forty-second session, for the skilful and able manner in which he performed his tasks during his tenure.

During the forty-first session of the General Assembly, in 1986, I stood at this rostrum and voiced my deep concern about problems and conflicts around the world. I said then with deep regret that it was hard to remain an optimist. I declared that we needed a new world order of peace and justice within which all nations could co-operate peacefully with one another and live in harmony.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

But today, two years after my somewhat pessimistic observation, the world appears to be a different place. In contrast to 1986 it is now easier for me to be an optimist. This year, 1988, has marked a new and more encouraging trend in international relations: a trend towards peace and accommodation; a trend towards co-operation and even consensus among the permanent members of the Security Council; a trend towards a world in which peaceful relations between States is no longer an abstract dream but is gradually becoming a part of reality. My Government welcomes these new trends and this new momentum with enthusiasm.

It is apparent to all that this momentum owes a great deal to the success of multilateral diplomacy. It owes a great deal to the dedication, perseverance and tireless efforts of the United Nations and its able Secretary-General.

Thailand's faith in the United Nations has never been shaken. Over the years, even during less optimistic times, commitment to the United Nations has always been a cornerstone of Thailand's foreign policy. Now, with seemingly increased political will for accommodation and peace around the world, the United Nations chances for success in achieving its noble tasks have become greater.

Events of recent months testify to the enhanced value and effectiveness of the United Nations when it is able to function in an environment of international accommodation between the super-Powers and of closer co-operation among the permanent members of the Security Council. The Afghan peace accords bring closer to reality the total withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and the exercise by the Afghan people of their right to self-determination, as has been called for by successive General Assembly resolutions. The cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war offers renewed hope for peace in the Persian Gulf. Recent talks between the two Cypriot communities provide the basis for lasting peace and stability on that island. The acceptance by Morocco and the POLISARIO Front of the

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

Secretary-General's peace plan could bring to an end the conflict in Western Sahara. The recent breakthrough in the Namibian question offers hope for the attainment of self-determination and independence by the Namibian people.

My delegation hopes that the breakthrough with regard to the Namibian question will have a spill-over effect on the prospects for the realization of peace and justice in the southern African region. We hope that this breakthrough will mark the beginning of the end of South Africa's apartheid system. Peace and justice in southern Africa will be possible only after the eradication of apartheid.

It is expected that progress towards peace in the Persian Gulf and in other regions of the world will help revitalize the peace process in the Middle East. For a permanent peace in the Middle East to become a reality, the question of Palestine must be resolved. It must be resolved in such a way as to take into consideration the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as well as the legitimate security concerns of all States in the region.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

My delegation hopes that all these encouraging trends towards peace and harmony in the various regions of the world will gain momentum in the days and months ahead.

On the question of Kampuchea, this year also witnessed some movement towards a comprehensive political settlement of the problem. The most recent development was the Jakarta Informal Meeting held in Indonesia in July this year. It brought together for the first time the conflicting parties, including Viet Nam, the occupying Power. Representatives of other countries concerned in the region were also present.

However, in spite of those new developments, many obstacles still remain. The main objectives of the United Nations concerning Kampuchea, as reflected in repeated United Nations resolutions on the subject, remain implemented. As we meet here today, Vietnamese troops remain in Kampuchea. The restoration and preservation of Kampuchea's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity has yet to be achieved. The Kampucheans have not been allowed to exercise their right to self-determination.

Thailand and the other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) would like to see a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean problem as soon as possible. To this end, we are again submitting a draft resolution on the item "The situation in Kampuchea", in which we have included elements which we believe are necessary components of such a comprehensive political settlement. We believe that it is a fair and balanced draft resolution worthy of the full support of the members of the Assembly.

A first step in this process is the total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea. There must also be an effective international presence, perhaps including peace-keeping forces, to ensure the withdrawal of foreign forces and to help maintain law and order in Kampuchea.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

We also envisage the formation of an interim administering authority to oversee the transition period and to prepare for free elections, which we hope will lead to true national reconciliation among the Kampuchean people. We remain hopeful that the future Kampuchean nation will be neutral, independent and non-aligned, posing no threat to any of its neighbours.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the President of the International Conference on Kampuchea, Mr. Leopold Gratz, for his continuing effort towards finding a lasting political solution to the Kampuchean problem.

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation of the continuous efforts of the Secretary-General to find a lasting political solution to the Kampuchean problem. We hope that the international community will give the necessary support and encouragement in this another important mission for peace undertaken by the Secretary-General.

In East Asia, my delegation maintains a deep interest in the Korean question. Thailand supports the proposal for détente between North and South Korea and my delegation hopes that both Koreas, through dialogues and political settlement, can realize their aspirations for eventual peaceful reunification.

The refugee problem in South-East Asia remains one of the most tragic consequences of the Indo-Chinese conflicts. With each passing year, the refugee problem has become increasingly complicated. Instead of genuine refugees, we have seen systematic migration of those seeking a better life. The alarming upsurge in boat arrivals from Viet Nam in 1987 and early 1988 and the unresolved dilemma of "long-stayers" warrant a more innovative and effective strategy to deal with this problem.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

When I met my ASEAN colleagues in Bangkok this past summer we called for the convening of a new international conference on Indo-Chinese refugees, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, by early 1989. Such a conference would provide an appropriate forum in which to set out such strategies. In this regard, the United Nations, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, should play a central role in persuading all concerned to participate in the common effort to meet this great and sad challenge to humanity.

On the question of disarmament, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that genuine, symmetrical and verifiable arms limitation leading to general and complete disarmament is the means to achieve international peace, harmony and security. My delegation therefore welcomes the recent success in bilateral discussions and negotiations between the two super-Powers with a view to implementing a 50 per cent reduction of strategic weapons. My delegation also welcomes the ratification by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. Those two events give a powerful momentum to the efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament. My delegation is hopeful that this momentum will provide a significant impetus to further progress in the multilateral disarmament process.

In our interdependent world, bilateral diplomacy must be complemented by multilateral diplomacy, and vice versa. My delegation therefore firmly supports United Nations efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. Although no immediate breakthrough was accomplished, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament served a useful purpose. It brought the members of the international community together and focused their attention on disarmament. During the session extensive exchanges of views took place. Those exchanges will undoubtedly serve as building blocks for the future.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

In addressing ourselves to the question of general and complete disarmament we must always be mindful that this includes chemical and biological as well as conventional weapons. Thailand supports the tireless efforts of the United Nations and the members of the international community to reach a verifiable agreement to control and eliminate chemical weapons.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

In regard to the question of disarmament in general, Thailand has always been concerned about the diversion of financial, material and human resources from development and welfare to armaments. My delegation therefore welcomes the growing recognition of the linkage between disarmament and development. We are encouraged by the success of the recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

Another serious problem for mankind is that of narcotic drugs. Thailand has always been in the forefront in the global war against narcotic drugs. Drug abuse is destructive to our generation, and will be to future ones as well. The United Nations campaign against illicit drugs must be strengthened and sustained. To fight this global menace we need to act decisively and in a concerted way. We need an increased world-wide commitment and co-ordination within the United Nations framework to combat the international drug problem.

Let us turn our attention to the question of human rights. A new world order of peace and justice cannot come about without universal respect for human rights. Indeed, faith in fundamental human rights is a corner-stone and a guiding principle of the United Nations. Lessons of history have shown us that disregard for human rights and fundamental freedoms has always been a major cause of international tension and conflict. As we mark the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, let us reaffirm our commitment to honour all the provisions of the Declaration.

Turning to the subject of economic development, I cannot hide the fact that Thailand's economic growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the year 1986 to 1987 and expected rate of 8 per cent for this year are a source of gratification to my delegation. Although we are becoming increasingly industrialized, Thailand remains overall an agricultural society. The livelihood of approximately 80 per cent of Thailand's population depends on agriculture.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

Thailand's economic progress owes a great deal to the existence of a stable form of government, a sizeable domestic market and efficient economic measures as well as the endowment of a skilled and semi-skilled labour force. It also owes a lot to the practice of forward-looking planning. In all, hard work and responsible behaviour have contributed substantially to Thailand's economic success. It is hard-earned and indigenous.

Thailand remains concerned with rising protectionist measures. The existence of trade barriers, farm subsidies and other support programmes in developed countries has adversely affected the export earnings of developing countries and the well-being of their peoples. That directly hurts Thailand, the majority of whose population is dependent on agricultural earnings. We join the world community in urging those countries to reverse these protectionist trends. In this connection, Thailand attaches great importance to the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations, which should bring liberalization of and better discipline in the world trade system.

On agriculture in particular, Thailand, along with other free-agricultural-trade advocates, especially the Cairns Group countries, is seeking comprehensive reform through liberalization. We also look forward to seeing tangible progress in negotiations on this important issue by the mid-term review at Montreal this December.

On the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, my delegation feels that it is important for the countries in Africa to pursue and deepen their reform processes. Moreover, the international community should try to mobilize additional resources to assist African countries during the remaining term of the Programme of Action. Thailand, for its part, will continue to do its best to facilitate the comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action.

(Mr. Savetsila, Thailand)

The awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is another reflection of international recognition of the valuable contribution by the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security. I should like to pay a warm tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His tireless efforts to ensure world peace and justice have clearly borne fruit. He has our full support in the continued performance of his noble and difficult task. I once again salute him and the able members of the United Nations Secretariat for their hard work and dedication.

Having reviewed the recent developments around the world, I can conclude that the general outlook is encouraging. It does seem that there is increased momentum towards a new world order of peace and justice. We must work hard together to keep this momentum alive. Each and every one of us must do what we can to contribute to the cause of world peace, justice and progress.

ADDRESS BY MR. SOTSHA DLAMINI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Mr. Sotsha Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Excellency Mr. Sotsha Dlamini, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. DLAMINI (Swaziland): Sir, it is my honour and privilege, on behalf of the Government of His Majesty King Mswati III and the peace-loving people of the Kingdom of Swaziland, to convey our profound appreciation and congratulations on Mr. Dante Caputo's well-deserved election to the presidency of this historic forty-third session of our Organization's General Assembly. This delegation is not only convinced of his outstanding diplomatic skills and sense of duty, but it is equally confident that under his stewardship our proceedings will indeed again be marked with historic excellence and constructive results.

Our tribute and profound gratitude also go to his outstanding predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin, a noble son of the German Democratic Republic, who safely guided the Assembly's affairs with rare excellence. Indeed, his tenure in office was characterized by some of the most problematic scenarios in the annals of contemporary international affairs.

My delegation notes with a sense of pride and humility that the international situation in which the current session is being held is not only politically favourable but also holds some optimistic promises for mankind. It is an era influenced by new political thinking as well as by bold diplomatic initiatives to resolve current conflicts.

We further take pride and draw inspiration from the fact that we are witnessing positive trends towards a new epoch of effective mechanisms for global political-crisis management, largely inspired by the United Nations system. My delegation therefore welcomes the current relaxation of tensions between the super-Powers and their initiation of a meaningful dialogue on numerous important global issues, especially in the field of disarmament, and including some hotbeds of conflict of both regional and international dimensions. We believe that to be fundamental and consonant with the United Nations Charter by promoting international peace and security.

(Mr. Dlamini, Swaziland)

His Majesty's Government and the people of Swaziland have followed with keen interest the unfolding events in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. We too share the sentiments of the international community, which, under United Nations auspices, has spared no effort in seeking an amicable political settlement to resolve one of the most protracted post-Second-World-War crises, whose dimensions have tested the strength of the Organization.

We continue to share in the guarded optimism that United Nations initiatives to resolve the Spanish Sahara and Kampuchea conflicts will further enhance its future role and our resolve in multilateral diplomacy.

At this juncture, I should like to pay a tribute and express gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. His Majesty's Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland continue to follow his reports and recommendations that chart our multilateral processes in international relations. We therefore note with pride the fact that the Secretary-General and all Members of the United Nations have brought their good judgement to bear on many international crises. In their continued search for solutions to some very intractable conflicts they have played a pivotal role. We further salute the apostles of peace for having made it possible to defend the cause of freedom and human dignity under the umbrella of the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

On the other hand the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland is forced to note the painful analysis that for far too long has unfairly regarded the United Nations as a non-functional world body and characterized it as a talk shop. To the surprise of the prophets of doom, evidence that such is not the case has dramatically emerged. The United Nations has managed to initiate successful

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negotiations towards a solution in Afghanistan, in the Iran-Iraq war, in Kampuchea, in the Angolan conflict and in Western Sahara.

However, many other issues remain partly or totally unresolved in spite of the efforts of the United Nations. The Organization continues to struggle with the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism from the face of the earth. The external-debt burden is worsening by the day, and that is an indication of the gap that still exists between developed and developing countries. The United Nations is fully aware that millions are faced with hunger and starvation in many parts of the world. Many Member States, like our beloved country, Swaziland, are faced with an influx of refugees and displaced persons.

At the end of 1987, Swaziland, which occupies an area of only 17,364 square kilometres, with a population of about 750,000, had 350 registered urban refugees and approximately 45,000 rural refugees. The numbers are increasing rapidly on a daily basis, and the critical situation faced by the refugees involves the shortage of food and the inadequacy of land, which limits the scope for productive agricultural activities.

The complex situation in the Middle East is cause for great concern, for it has reached an explosive stage where strife between Palestinians and Jews continues to prevail. Swaziland encourages the United Nations to redouble its efforts towards the attainment of a peaceful solution to that critical issue.

The Korean peninsula is still characterized by tension between the North and the South. That unhealthy atmosphere has promoted distrust and hatred in the peninsula, which was unfortunately divided by differences in ideology. We strongly recommend that all external forces cease forthwith from interfering in the internal affairs of both Koreas, and, in this regard, we believe that the people of the

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peninsula have the tremendous responsibility and capacity to enter into direct inter-Korean negotiations themselves.

We also commend the efforts of the United Nations in bringing about speedy and genuine self-determination and independence to the people of New Caledonia. We wholeheartedly support United Nations initiatives to conduct an unbiased referendum, which will undoubtedly indicate the true aspirations of the people of New Caledonia.

In Central America and the Caribbean we continue to note with great concern that a number of countries are increasingly strife torn by reason of their deteriorating economic situations, social unrest and political instability. Nicaragua and Panama, for example, have been and are still being subjected to pressure by military and paramilitary activities, as well as by economic embargoes. Consequently, the economies of those States, which are suspected of importing foreign ideologies, have been hard hit, to the social detriment of their peoples. We appeal to all Member States in the region to resolve their problems by peaceful negotiations, as advocated by His Majesty King Sobhuza II and currently by His Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

This year marks the forty-third anniversary of the beginning of the arms race. The horrendous events that occurred at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, resulting in the deaths of millions of people and in massive destruction of property, are an indelible part of the annals of history. What mankind now faces is the enormous production of highly sophisticated nuclear weapons that are capable of destroying mankind many, many times over.

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My delegation views with utmost concern the currently escalating arms race, which must of necessity be stopped in order "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". The outbreak of another world war, which would certainly lead to nuclear holocaust - a situation that would mean unprecedented disaster for mankind - must be totally avoided.

It is the responsibility of the international community to promote world peace and security for purposes of global development and co-operation by moving in the direction of complete disarmament. The Kingdom of Swaziland therefore commends the efforts of the United Nations in organizing three major conferences in 1978, 1982 and 1988 aimed at sensitizing Member States to the need to reach a common consensus in the area of disarmament. Although all these conferences have failed to attain this major goal, it must be realized that they have, to a great extent, already stirred the conscience of the world community. The seriousness of the arms race was demonstrated by the heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries at the seventh summit conference held in New Delhi in March 1983, at which it was observed that:

"... the greatest peril facing the world today is the threat to the survival of mankind from nuclear war. Disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, is no longer a moral issue; it is an issue of human survival. ... Nuclear weapons are more than weapons of war. They are instruments of mass annihilation." (A/38/132, para. 28)

It is our humble view that the excessive expenditure on weaponry suffocates the development of the world economy, thus perpetuating the misery and poverty afflicting more than two thirds of mankind. We therefore call for the immediate conclusion of a convention on both chemical and conventional weapons, not only to prohibit their development, production, stockpiling and possible use, but also to provide for the earliest destruction of existing stocks.

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The people of the Kingdom of Swaziland has learned with great shock and alarm that certain nuclear-possessing States have resolved to dump their nuclear wastes on the continent of Africa. What we find disquieting in this rather sinister episode is their justification of this act by the following reasons: first, that their nuclear garbage is devoid of potential chemical or toxic risks to the people and the environment, yet they are not prepared themselves to dump it inside their countries; and, secondly, that compensatory financial aid follows the dumping exercise.

We in the Kingdom of Swaziland remain ardent believers in the norms of international economic co-operation and in the positive spirit of multilateralism. However, my delegation continues to view with added concern the plight of our hard-hit fragile economies in the many developing countries, and particularly the grave agony of Africa's economic crisis. Indeed, it is our strongest observation that, in spite of the economic recovery experienced in some industrialized countries, developing countries continue to be confronted with an adverse external environment whose dimensions have devastated our strenuous efforts towards achieving the goal of economic self-reliance.

These countries continue to suffer from a combination of serious economic problems, inter alia, declining commodity prices, sharp exchange rate fluctuations, a severe debt crisis prompted by excessively high interest rates, and stagnation of official development assistance.

It may also be observed that studies conducted by world financial institutions do predict that the situation is extremely bleak for the sub-Saharan countries which, over the years, have been experiencing the worst economic declines in history, particularly in per capita income, investment and consumption. For instance, while growth in output was estimated at 3.2 per cent in 1987 compared to

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4 per cent in 1986, the grim reality is that debt servicing has assumed crippling proportions, ranging from 30 per cent to 100 per cent of exports. The World Bank, on the other hand, also estimates an annual resource gap of more than \$2.5 billion for these countries for the period 1986 to 1990, that is, if import levels of 1980 to 1982 are achieved and the necessary structural reforms are carried out. This is certainly not an encouraging scenario for North-South and South-South economic relations. We further wish to observe that the Kingdom of Swaziland is a small land-locked country whose economic development solidly depends on external trade. Thus, such unprecedented declines in commodity prices and the unfavourable international economic outlook represent a major collapse of our fragile economy.

Above all, for us in Swaziland the agricultural sector plays an important role in our economic development. It generates 71 per cent of our export earnings and provides 75 per cent of our labour force. It is therefore the policy of His Majesty's Government to intensify our industrial base development in order to enhance the quality of life and the betterment of living standards for our citizens. Thus we are active members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, whose cardinal principles and purposes remain aimed at nothing other than the modest consolidation of our hard won socio-economic and political independence.

My delegation has no illusions about the task that lies ahead, but we do have confidence in the modern technological institutions, headed by the United Nations system, that seek to harmonize the activities of our global village. We therefore, pay our highest tribute to the donor community, the United Nations system, and our partners in economic development for all the generous assistance rendered to improve our country, Swaziland.

Respect for human rights is of cardinal importance in our world. It is a pity

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that we still learn of torture, disappearances and wanton killings in different parts of the world. His Majesty's Government strongly condemns such sinister practices, and urges the international community to reaffirm its fundamental duty and encourage respect for human rights and freedom. Practices such as racism and racial discrimination have no place in the evolution of international law and modern civilization.

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The Government and people of the Kingdom of Swaziland attach great significance to the long-drawn-out conflicts in southern Africa. In our view, they do not augur well for the progress of human civilization, and, as members of that volatile region, we certainly cannot afford the consequences of indulging in the luxury of standing by with folded hands when our future is at stake. Equally, we have no illusions when analysing the events unfolding in our political backyard, but we are fully determined to pursue resolutely our mission of peace. Swaziland is on record as having initiated some bold diplomatic steps in the now historic Manzana Diplomacy, whose fundamental aim and objective is to build bridges of peace in our region. Above all, it seeks the promotion of direct, peaceful dialogue among leaders in southern Africa.

Furthermore, we note with great admiration the important role played by the Administration of the United States of America in bringing together the Governments of Cuba, Angola and South Africa in an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the Namibian and Angolan problems and consequently to the chronic problem inside South Africa.

We equally applaud the continued United Nations diplomatic initiatives in seeking a genuine and permanent political solution for the problems facing southern Africa, and we urge all towards peace in our region. My delegation also wishes to reaffirm in the strongest possible terms that the policy of His Majesty's Government is based on concrete factors of pragmatism rather than narrow political and ideological expediency. We are, therefore, committed to the sacred principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and those of the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement, particularly the principles pertaining to the right of self-determination and independence of peoples under colonialism, neo-colonialism and other pernicious forms of human oppression.

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Above all, Swaziland is committed to the settlement of international disputes by peaceful negotiations and the non-use of force, as envisaged in Chapters I and VI, particularly Articles 1 (2) and 33, of the Charter.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the tremendous role played by the United Nations in the comprehensive formulation, development and shaping of the law of the sea, which transcends the limits of national jurisdiction and accommodates the international uses of the sea and its resources. We are confident that the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea will continue to make effective progress, in the interest not only of the common heritage of mankind but also of the maintenance of peace and justice for all peoples in the world. It is particularly heartening that even my small, developing country, Swaziland, stands to benefit immensely from the successful implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We in the Kingdom of Swaziland are greatly perplexed by the spread of international terrorism, whose victims are innocent people, including women and children. We humbly urge all parties concerned to exercise both moral and political restraint in resolving their differences.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to pay a glowing tribute to the evolution of the United Nations system. This Organization is unique and remains "the last best hope for mankind". The people of Swaziland are only too proud to be associated with this noble Organization that has galvanized mankind into new and fresh concepts, guiding our onward march to a more peaceful and stable world of multilateral diplomacy. Thus, only a few weeks ago, the Kingdom of Swaziland celebrated its twentieth anniversary as a sovereign State; and, like many new States in the family of nations, we cannot forget how grateful and indebted we are

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to the international community for having made our national dreams possible. We further salute and honour the men of vision and wisdom whose Yalta and Dumbarton Oaks negotiations ushered us into this new world of the United Nations.

However, let us be realistic: the challenges that face us are daunting ones, but they are not beyond the ingenuity of humanity to surmount. We must, therefore, agree that we have not done sufficient. We must, therefore, move from words to deeds and make sure that together we can create true common security and peace for our peoples.

His Majesty's Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland wish to reaffirm their faith in and adherence to the principles of the Charter. They look forward to continued and fruitful co-operation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Sotsha Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. FILALI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I am particularly happy to express our most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

His outstanding personal qualities and deep knowledge of international issues augur well for the success of his work in discharge of the important responsibilities entrusted to him by the General Assembly. He may be assured of the complete readiness of our delegation to co-operate with him for the success of our deliberations.

I would also wish to extend to his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, all our thanks and appreciation for the dedication he brought to his mandate in the course of the last session during a difficult period in the history of the United Nations

Our Organization has reached the years of full maturity, strengthened by the experience acquired over its 43 years of existence and tempered by the tests it has undergone in the midst of profound upheaval on the international scene since its establishment. The United Nations, which began a process of reform over two years ago, may well be proud today of the decisive and significant results achieved.

In this respect I should like to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, who has spared neither his time nor his energy to ensure the continuity of the work of the United Nations in spite of the financial crisis, while making it perform more efficiently and effectively. Of course any social entity must be ready to respond at all times to the demands of its environment, and in this respect reform will remain an ongoing concern. But it is also up to us, as Member States, to abide by the rules of the game we agreed to and the decisions arising therefrom.

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This attitude is necessary more than ever now that a climate of harmony, détente and openness is emerging and real prospects are taking shape for the settlement of many international crises in respect of which the United Nations, already involved, will necessarily be called upon to play an increasingly important role in the finding of solutions, guaranteeing and implementing them. In such a context, characterized by agreement and dialogue, with respect for the fundamental principles of the Charter, everyone is becoming aware of the irreplaceable role of the United Nations as a centre for harmonizing efforts towards shared goals.

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The Kingdom of Morocco, which, throughout the sessions of the General Assembly and the work of the United Nations, has always demonstrated a pragmatic and responsible approach, strongly supports the Secretary-General's appeal, in his report of 14 September 1988, for avoidance of rhetorical inflation in General Assembly debates and the adoption of ineffective, stock resolutions, and for the strengthening of the essential effectiveness of the Security Council through the unreserved support of all Member States for its decisions on given disputes, by not simply accepting a text but supporting it resolutely at the diplomatic level.

We must not lose sight of the fact that all these mechanisms which have to reconcile diverging interests, must be based on the ethical foundation that is the guarantee of the durability of the Organization - that is, the promotion and safeguarding of dignity and the fundamental rights of the human person.

It is our duty, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to work together in all international bodies to guarantee the development of man's full potential, eliminate all discrimination, condemn unreservedly the odious crime of apartheid, and denounce violations of human dignity of any kind.

The remarkable contribution of the United Nations to the establishment of the conventional and institutional framework for the definition of, and respect for, human rights must be accompanied by the widest possible support for international covenants, so that there may be full observance of the universal humanist values that are the foremost prerequisite for and the objective of peace.

The unbridled arms race and the continued development of weapons of mass destruction constitute a danger to international peace and security and a threat to the very survival of mankind. This is why the international community, which noted with satisfaction the conclusion by the two major Powers, in December 1987, of the

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Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - is justified in expecting that other agreements will be reached, especially in connection with strategic weapons and denuclearization, in order to preserve whole regions from the danger of nuclear confrontation.

We regret that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament held last June did not achieve the expected results. We hope that none the less it contributed to encouraging the big Powers to reduce strategic weapons and promoting the early adoption of appropriate rules and mechanisms for the prohibition of the production and use of chemical weapons, and the destruction of existing stockpiles.

The building of a peaceful and just society undoubtedly depends on the efforts of all countries, regardless of size or strength, and on the commitment of all concerned to take additional measures, in a spirit of solidarity, to prevent conflicts, extinguish hotbeds of tension rapidly and establish relations of good-neighbourliness on a stable and mutually advantageous basis.

My country, which works unceasingly for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of co-operation at the bilateral, regional and international levels, welcomes the new spirit that inspires this session and the favourable atmosphere in which it is taking place.

The well-deserved award of the Noble Peace Prize to the United Nations forces and observers is timely confirmation of the expanding role of the Organization and the recognition of its efforts towards the establishment of peaceful, just international relations. We commend the sacrifices made and the courage shown by the missionaries of peace, and we hope that, as their field of activity widens, they will be given the unanimous support of the international community so they may discharge their noble task in the best possible conditions.

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For the past eight years a conflict of exceptional violence has left two brother Muslim countries - Iraq and Iran - in mourning. Throughout these years we have appealed from this rostrum, and in other international forums for a cessation of hostilities so that the conditions may be created for a constructive dialogue and a final settlement of this crisis. My country therefore welcomed with great satisfaction and relief the Secretary-General's announcement, on 20 August, of the cease-fire and its acceptance by the two parties. With the unanimous and sustained support of the Security Council, Mr. Perez de Cuellar was succeeded, through his intensive mediation efforts, in bringing to an end one of the most devastating conflicts since the Second World War, thus paving the way for appropriate discussion of all outstanding problems and to the working out of a just, honourable and lasting settlement.

The withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan was the prerequisite for genuine national reconciliation and for the assumption by that country of control over its own future. Thanks to the patient work and constant readiness of the Secretary-General, that is, day by day, becoming a reality. The process of good offices set in motion, and the political will shown by the parties, made possible the conclusion of the Geneva Accords, on 14 April 1988, guaranteed by the two big Powers. We are convinced that the implementation of that agreement in good faith and under the supervision of the United Nations will be the prelude to a new era in Afghanistan, in which that suffering country will be able to heal its wounds and begin the crucial work of reconstruction and development, to the benefit of its entire population. We hope, therefore, that in the near future Afghanistan will be able to resume the place it had always held in the Islamic community.

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There are some glimmers of hope in other regions of the world. These must be encouraged and supported to make possible the beginning of the peace process and the removal of all obstacles to the self-determination of the peoples concerned.

This is the case with regard to the Brazzaville talks, the aim of which is the creation of conditions conducive to the prompt implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1987), which concerns the peace plan for Namibia. Pending the successful conclusion of these talks, we shall continue to give our full support to the Namibian people in seeking the fulfilment of its legitimate aspiration to independence and unity.

We are also pleased that there has been substantial progress towards ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Angola. But the stability and security of that brother country can be definitively guaranteed only through true national reconciliation. Morocco, which has spared no effort to that end, will continue to work side by side with other brother African countries towards a settlement, through dialogue, of the problems that remain between the parties to the conflict in Angola.

In Asia, the Jakarta meeting last July, convened at the initiative of the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, for the first time enabled all the parties directly involved in the question of Kampuchea to meet. It is important that these efforts be continued to get under way a comprehensive political solution by organizing the withdrawal of foreign troops and, thereby ensuring that the Kampuchean people has control of its own destiny.

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In Cyprus, the mission of good offices gave both parties the framework for the constructive dialogue that began in Nicosia last month, the purpose of which was to smooth out the difficulties that were still pending and to arrive at a global and mutually acceptable settlement plan. This new breakthrough in favour of peace will, we hope, be the first step towards harmonious relations between the two Cypriot communities.

With regard to Central America, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its support for the action taken by the Contadora Group and the plan proposed by President Arias of Costa Rica to enable the region at last to enjoy peace and stability, free from any foreign interference.

Unfortunately, these happy breakthroughs towards peace did not benefit the Middle East, a region which for more than 40 years has been shaken by a cycle of violence and war though it is of crucial importance to the balance and stability of the world.

While the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories is essential, no lasting peace will come about in that region of the world without the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to an independent State. That people is experiencing the tragedy of occupation, exile and deprivation of its most fundamental rights. To the poignant appeal of the Palestinians for justice, Israel has responded so far only by increasing repression, imprisonment, expulsion and assassination. Now that all energies are focused on the peaceful solution of conflicts and the safeguarding of the rights of the human communities concerned, it is unacceptable that the tragic fate of the Palestinian people should be ignored and the future of its children be at a total impasse.

It is no wonder therefore that this generation of despair has no alternative but daily to face danger, unarmed, in order to affirm in the eyes of the world its

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right to freedom and to an independent homeland. The intifadah, which has lasted almost a year now in the occupied Palestinian territories, should awaken us to the urgent need for a solution to this crisis, which is gaining in intensity and cruelty with each passing day. Every effort should be made to hold an international conference on the Middle East as soon as possible, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

The tragic situation prevailing in the Middle East did not spare Lebanon, which, because of foreign interference, was plunged into disarray, instability and the horrors of civil war. The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its solidarity with the Lebanese people for the safeguarding of its territorial integrity, national unity and sovereignty. My country calls for the cessation of all foreign interference which represents a real threat of partition for this Arab land, once a model of tolerance and coexistence among communities and religions.

Because of its geopolitical location the Kingdom of Morocco attaches great importance to the stability and security of the Mediterranean. Our constant concern to see this area freed from the nuclear threat by the elimination of missiles on naval fleets in the Mediterranean is therefore understandable. We remain convinced however that the development of harmonious relations between the two shores is a necessary element in the establishment of genuine regional peace and security. For that reason the Mediterranean policy of my country stresses co-operation with Europe and so last April Morocco signed agreements with the European Economic Community (EEC) following its expansion to include Spain and Portugal. It is undeniable, however, that this relationship, which we should like

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to be an exemplary one, will not come to fruition without an abatement in some of the sources of tension remaining in the Mediterranean.

Thus it is important to resolve the dispute concerning the enclaves of Sebta and Mellilia and other Moroccan islands and islets under Spanish occupation, in order to prevent this anachronistic situation - remnant of a past era - from affecting the harmony that should preside over the relations between the two shores of the Straits of Gibraltar. We are convinced that the recent agreements, signed at bilateral and EEC levels, will facilitate the settlement of these territorial disputes in the mutual interest of the two countries. We in Morocco would like to preserve the manifold ties which throughout history have existed between the Moroccan and Spanish peoples.

Security and development are indivisible. Unfortunately, in the field of development this decade has been one of disenchantment and the failure of the North-South dialogue. Global negotiations to counter the crisis and bring about balanced economic growth did not go beyond statements and declarations.

In this regard, even though political stability in Africa hinges on real development and in particular on the settlement of the crucial debt problem, the special session devoted to that continent did not measure up to expectations.

Standing as we are on the threshold of a new century, it is essential that we meet the unavoidable challenges facing us and focus all our energies on the establishment of global patterns of development that take account of existing complementary factors and fundamental needs in order to guarantee for all a decent quality of life based on respect for socio-cultural differences. While pursuing this great ambition we should, at the same time, seek urgent solutions to the most pressing problems. Therefore it is important to deal as soon as possible with the external debt crisis in its political, economic and social dimensions. This calls

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for an innovative strategy since the conventional approach based on annual rescheduling alone is proving to be ineffective.

While acknowledging the merits of bilateral and multilateral initiatives taken in favour of low-income debtor countries, it is time to recognize the importance of reducing the outstanding debt and the debt servicing of medium-income debtor countries and of resolutely tackling the commercial debt of heavily indebted countries.

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In this context, my country supports the recent additional proposals made by His Highness Amir Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait, by President François Mitterrand and by Prime Minister Takeshita, aimed at alleviating the public and commercial debt burden.

At the same time, we must take advantage of the forthcoming multilateral talks, especially the Uruguay Round, to improve the international economic environment in the spheres of the flow of net resources, trade and the stabilization and raising of commodity prices.

My country intends to shoulder its share of the responsibility and make its contribution to the solution of problems at the regional and international levels. Thus, Morocco recently hosted the conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement on food and agriculture and on the foreign debt crisis, as well as the first meeting of African experts on geophysical threats in Africa. In order to mobilize all resources and involve the countries concerned in the struggle against the danger of locust infestation, His Majesty King Hassan II has taken the initiative in convening an international conference at a high level, which will be held in Morocco on 25 October. It is also on Morocco's initiative that the first ministerial conference on co-operation with regard to fisheries between African countries bordering on the Atlantic Ocean will be held at Rabat next March. We hope that these meetings, in addition to creating a spirit of solidarity, will make it possible to establish complete and lasting co-operation, especially in Africa.

Given the impasse in the North-South dialogue, co-operation and regional integration are increasingly felt to be a vital necessity. In the Maghreb, the building of a unified area is not a new idea; it is something that from the outset has been part of the struggle of our country for national liberation. Thus, in his statement in Tangiers in 1947, His Majesty Mohammed V appealed for the independence of Morocco within the framework of the unification of the Maghreb.

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Since its independence Morocco has worked unceasingly, with faith and determination, for the construction of a Maghreb whose peoples are united by ties of brotherhood, that stem naturally from their history, culture and shared religion and from their united struggle for liberation. We are pleased to be able to say that the Maghreb project is now gaining ground. Strengthened by our respective experiences, we are now making realistic, considered progress towards a regional integration that can be a source of co-operation and development and a factor of stability and peace for the peoples of the Maghreb.

Thus, in June of 1988, for the first time since my country's independence, a summit meeting of five Maghrebi Heads of State was held in Algiers and agreed on the establishment of a Maghrebi High Commission, which during its inaugural meeting distributed responsibilities equitably among the five countries of our region, each being responsible for a commission on the economic, financial, socio-cultural, institutional and human aspects of regional integration.

A second session of the Maghrebi High Commission will be held in Rabat at the end of this month in order to continue the already well advanced work of integrating the Maghreb.

Morocco solemnly reaffirms its complete readiness to do all in its power to fashion at a steady pace a peaceful, united Maghreb that responds to the profound aspiration of our peoples.

My country is especially pleased by the climate of peace that has characterized inter-Maghreb relations over the past few months, in that the beneficial impact of this now is apparent with regard to the final settlement of the question of Western Sahara. I would remind members that as soon as Mr. Perez de Cuellar took the initiative of extending his good offices for the settlement of this question, we expressed our complete confidence in him and our

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determination to co-operate fully for the success of the process that he was preparing to undertake. This process has now made decisive progress. Thus, a technical Mission of the United Nations visited the region in November 1987 to gather at first hand all the necessary data for the establishment of a cease-fire and the organization of a referendum on self-determination.

A decisive step was taken on 30 August last when the parties accepted the proposals made by the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). These proposals, which are based on the principles and the practice of the United Nations in this field, constitute a final settlement plan for the problem of the Sahara.

The plan provides for the appointment of a representative of the Secretary-General, the proclamation by the Secretary-General of a cease-fire, under the guarantee and supervision of United Nations Observers and verification by means of impartial and objective procedures of the persons entitled to participate in the referendum. Lastly, under the terms of this plan the referendum will be prepared and organized under the authority of the representative appointed by the Secretary-General for that purpose.

When presenting his peace plan to the Security Council, on 20 September, the Secretary-General indicated that the progress achieved towards a settlement of the question of Western Sahara constituted

"a preliminary ... result, which it is extremely important to consolidate in order to preserve the momentum of the process." (S/PV.2826, p. 8)

Morocco, which attaches great importance to the establishment of a genuine climate of peace and trust in the region, welcomes the support given by the Security Council to the good offices mission by its adoption, on 20 September 1988, of resolution 621 (1988), in which the Security Council

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"1. Decides to authorize the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative for Western Sahara;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to it as soon as possible a report on the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and on ways and means to ensure the organization and supervision of such a referendum by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity."

The unanimous support of the Security Council for the proposals made by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the Chairman of the OAU is of great importance. The good offices process has now entered its last and practical stage, leading in the near future to the establishment of the cease-fire and the organization of the referendum on self-determination.

We were particularly pleased by the unanimity in the Security Council in adopting resolution 621 (1988). That unanimity is reflected in the extremely favourable way in which the entire international community has welcomed the Secretary-General's peace plan.

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Since the various regions of the world, through unprecedented progress in communications, are well tuned to each other and simultaneously share the same emotions, it is time to emphasize the positive factors of unity and harmony. The United Nations provides us with a unique forum for the harmonization of views and the establishment of universal consensus, so long as unity of purpose prevails over the outdated reflexes of sterile distrust.

The current situation inevitably invites us to the dialogue and mutual understanding that led to the noble ideals which inspired the drafters of our Charter and which must now guide our approach to the evermore complex realities of our present world.

Mr. HABIBOU (Niger) (interpretation from French): I am pleased to convey to Mr. Dante Caputo the heartfelt congratulation of the delegation of Niger on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. His election is a well-deserved tribute to a seasoned politician and a talented, experienced diplomat. It is also testimony to the Assembly's recognition of the positive role played by his country, Argentina, in international affairs. Naturally, we wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that under his guidance our work will be successful, and I wish to assure him of the full co-operation of my delegation.

The change in world affairs since the previous session of our Assembly is a source of satisfaction because of prospects for the settlement of conflicts. Nevertheless, there are still grounds for concern.

In Africa, the racist Pretoria régime continues to defy the international community and to disregard all decisions taken by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) demanding the abolition of apartheid and independence for Namibia.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

Niger has been closely following efforts being made in southern Africa to set in motion, as of 1 November 1988, the process of independence for the Territory of Namibia, in keeping with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict between Angola and South Africa that has been going on for so many years. My country is not only very interested in the ongoing talks between the parties concerned but also particularly hopeful that they will lead to a lasting agreement.

However, given the fact that South Africa has time and again presented the international community with underhanded manoeuvres, delaying tactics and other repeated about-turns, Niger is suspicious and intends to maintain vigilance; hence it calls upon the Assembly to keep up constant pressure on that country until it heeds reason and complies with its decisions.

Within South Africa itself, Niger will continue to demand the dismantlement of the abhorrent policy of apartheid and the unconditional release of all political prisoners, including in particular Nelson Mandela. Finally, my country reiterates its support for the just, legitimate struggle of the freedom fighters of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).

In the far eastern part of our continent, the Horn of Africa is starting to enjoy a climate of peace and security. We hope that guns will forever be silent in that region and that reconciliation and mutual trust will be strengthened between the fraternal peoples concerned.

In Chad, an era of peace is being established. Niger is both relieved and gratified, for it has always called for dialogue and a return to negotiation.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

My country hopes that the ground swell of peace we are witnessing throughout the world will reach Africa too, and in particular Chad. In this respect, we are very happy to witness the process of normalization of relations between Chad and Libya, which was initiated by the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In the far west of Africa, a serious problem still persists: I refer to the conflict in the Western Sahara between peoples whose origin, history, culture and religion have tended to bring them closer towards unity.

The Government and the people of Niger have been following with keen interest the diplomatic efforts made in the region to narrow the Moroccan and Algerian positions on the one hand and to have Morocco and the POLISARIO accept, on the other, United Nations proposals on the organization of a referendum on self-determination.

We invite the opposing parties to avoid any action that might compromise the current peace process and to redouble contacts to narrow their differences.

Accordingly, we exhort all parties to continue to trust in our messenger of peace, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, and to give him their full co-operation.

There is another source of concern in Africa that cannot be ignored. I refer to the 6 million refugees and other displaced persons and to the fact that their number is constantly increasing.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

The plight of these unfortunate people deserves special attention by the General Assembly; this tragic situation cries out to the conscience of the world. We sincerely hope that recommendations adopted on this question, especially those adopted at the recent Oslo conference, will be implemented as soon as possible in order to end forthwith the untold daily suffering of these throngs of exiles.

In the rest of the world, other threats to international peace and security continue to be of concern. Of these, the foremost is the Iran-Iraq war, which is among the most fratricidal since the end of the Second World War and has lasted eight long years. Niger has followed, supported and encouraged the efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and, especially, the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, towards the conclusion and signature of a cease-fire agreement between the belligerents, followed by the convening of peace negotiations. My country is happy that Iran and Iraq have accepted Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as a basis for preliminary negotiations in Geneva.

My country appeals to those two members of the Islamic ummah to put aside past rancour and continue to show a political will as determined as that which led to the cease-fire, with a view to attaining the ultimate goal, which continues to be peace.

Another deadly conflict, that in Afghanistan, is also of concern to us. But the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of that country that began a few months ago following the 14 April 1988 Geneva agreement between the super-Powers, reached under the auspices of the Secretary-General, is a sign that peace will soon return to that country. Niger encourages Mr. Perez de Cuellar to continue his efforts to enable the Afghan people freely to exercise their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

Turning to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Niger regrets that peace remains remote. There is a reason for this: Israel's continued total disregard for the many United Nations resolutions rejecting and condemning the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories as well as the alteration of their demographic nature and their legal, cultural and religious status.

We in Niger are convinced that an overall just and lasting settlement of the Israel-Palestinian problem necessitates scrupulous respect for Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which recognize, inter alia, the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

It goes without saying that Niger also supports the idea of convening, under United Nations auspices, an international conference on peace in the Middle East with the participation on an equal footing of all parties to the conflict.

The situation in Lebanon is worrisome. That country has been ravaged by war for almost 14 years. Niger believes that an end to outside interference, particularly by Israel, could help end bloody confrontation and enable the Lebanese people to restore their unity.

In South-East Asia, the Korean peninsula has been in a state of neither war nor peace since the 1953 armistice. We hope that all countries that, like Niger, have relations of friendship and co-operation both with the Republic of Korea and with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will step up their efforts to help them bring about a peaceful reunification of their country.

In that same region, we continue to follow closely the situation in Kampuchea, whose people is struggling for self-determination and liberation from foreign domination. In Kampuchea as in Afghanistan we condemn the illegal occupation of territories by foreign troops in violation of the norms of international law. The national independence and non-aligned status of that country must of necessity be safeguarded and guaranteed by the international community.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

Let me say a few words about disarmament. Niger is pleased that the two super-Powers were able to conclude an agreement on the dismantling and destruction of a category of missiles. For our part, we hope that all weapons - nuclear, biological or chemical - will be covered by a future treaty prohibiting them once and for all. Only this will bring peace and security to mankind.

My delegation believes further that it would be pointless to destroy the weapons amassed on our beloved planet Earth if the arms race were to be moved to outer space and pursued there. Disarmament is the concern of all States, so let us mobilize all our efforts and resources to protect the human race.

With respect to the economy, we wish to say that the gap between the rich industrialized countries and the countries said to be developing is widening. Recently a conference was held at New York under United Nations auspices to carry out a mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted in 1986. It noted that political measures and initiatives under the Programme have not yet resulted in any economic recovery for African States, which despite the expense have instituted structural adjustment measures and economic reform programmes.

To permit economic growth in developing countries in general, and in the poorest countries of Africa in particular, we believe the international community should continue action on the three fronts of debt, trade and raw materials and on the development of human resources.

With respect to debt, the crushing burden of debt servicing constitutes a brake on the development of our States. We believe that sustained joint effort involving a comprehensive, honest view of the problem by all is the only way to bring creditor and debtor countries together for a more just and equitable solution in keeping with the spirit and letter of the recommendations set out in resolution

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

42/198 and the decisions of the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Unfortunately, the damaging effects on our countries of the world economic crisis are not the only difficulties our hard-working peoples have had to face. Many disasters - drought, desertification, flooding, infestations of locusts and jerboas, and cyclones - hit us year after year, reducing to naught all our efforts and sacrifices in the name of self-sufficiency.

In Niger our rural populations face adversity with dignity and courage. Their efforts alone, unfortunately, are not enough to let them overcome these terrible disasters, and support from the international community is indispensable.

Niger cannot remain silent but must highlight the important and very worrying question of the toxic and radioactive industrial waste that is dumped in Africa, secretly and criminally. As members know, this question was thoroughly discussed in June 1988 at the Organization of African Unity, which recommended finding a solution through negotiations with the industrialized nations responsible for exporting these dangerous wastes.

Niger intends vigorously to denounce and condemn this reckless behaviour and to demand a halt to all transfers of toxic wastes to our continent. Africa cannot let itself be turned into a dumping ground: the survival of our peoples is at stake.

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

The question of human rights has always been a major concern of this Assembly. The United Nations has spared no sacrifice to promote, defend and guarantee human rights throughout the world. The fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we are celebrating at the end of the year, should be an opportunity for us all solemnly to reiterate our unswerving, irreversible commitment to the noble principles and ideals of that Declaration. Niger will do so unreservedly because it is enjoying an era of freedom thanks to our Head of State, General Ali Saibou. Since his accession to the Supreme Court in November 1987, he has taken important steps attesting to his determination to promote and guarantee public rights and freedoms. These include the release of all political detainees; the proclamation of a general amnesty authorizing the return to their homes of all citizens of Niger exiled abroad for political reasons; acceleration of the process of constitutional normalization; and, finally, the establishment of a national movement for society in development which, according to the Head of State, will be "a special forum for political expression within which citizens of Niger, men and women, will fight to reaffirm and defend their political, economic and social rights".

The United Nations, in addition to being an instrument for promoting and defending human rights, nations and people, is a special, irreplaceable instrument for the guarantee of international peace and security.

Niger therefore believes that it is the duty of all Members of this Organization to give it unreserved support. As far as we are concerned, we intend to do so despite the enormous difficulties we have to confront, and we fully intend to respect the commitments we have entered into as a sovereign State.

With regard to the recent successes of our Organization under the stewardship of our very competent indefatigable Secretary-General, Niger does not hesitate to

(Mr. Habibou, Niger)

issue an urgent appeal to all Member States to meet their financial obligations under the Charter thereby renewing their full confidence in the Organization.

This gesture is particularly necessary since the United Nations has quite rightly just been awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for 1988 thanks to the exemplary devotion of the peace-keeping forces. Peace obviously has a price; that is a fact we must all accept.

Allow me now to convey to Mr. Perez de Cuellar the admiration of Niger for his diplomatic successes in various delicate missions in the service of peace and international solidarity. They certainly redound to the honour of our Organization. We would simply say to him, "Thank you".

In conclusion, Niger hopes the United Nations will continue to enjoy the trust and constant support of all Members so that it can better discharge its noble and lofty mission of the promotion of peace, co-operation and international solidarity.

Mr. JAMEEL (Maldives): It gives me great pleasure to extend to Mr. Dante Caputo the warmest greetings of my delegation on his election as the President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I am fully confident that under his wise and able leadership this Assembly will make substantive progress and further consolidate the gains achieved during the past year.

May I also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, for his leadership and the able and exemplary manner in which he discharged his duties as President of the forty-second session.

A short time ago the world lost one of its outstanding statesman, General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, who not

(Mr. Jamsel, Maldives)

only contributed immensely to the cause of peace and justice in the world, but was also a pioneer of regional co-operation in South Asia, and a great supporter of freedom.

We are meeting this year with a note of renewed optimism. This note of optimism is largely due to the constant, tireless and patient efforts of the United Nations in resolving outstanding international disputes and tensions through peaceful means. We have witnessed a positive change in the global political environment.

The commendable efforts of the Secretary-General have brought a cease-fire to what seemed to be an unending war between Iran and Iraq; the Geneva Accords have melted away the tension over Afghanistan; there are signs of an early end to the Kampuchean crisis; and, with the Angolan accord, resolution of the Namibian issue appears to be in sight. Equipped with those positive developments, the Secretary-General is continuing his efforts for the resolution of the Cyprus issue and also the question of Western Sahara.

The United Nations has again asserted itself as the single most important forum, representative of mankind as a whole, capable of tackling and solving major international issues.

The General Assembly of the United Nations is the widest representative organ of the international community. The powers of the General Assembly encompass a very wide area and cover the entire gamut of international relations. The decisions of the General Assembly set forth in its recommendations and resolutions over the last 43 years have amply demonstrated the very wide range of subjects that it covers. Members of the United Nations have the obligation to treat resolutions with respect and a sense of commitment.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

We are disappointed that there are several resolutions on such important issues as human rights, the dismantling of apartheid, disarmament, prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the call for a new international economic order, and bridging the gap between the rich and the poor that have still not been implemented.

We would reiterate, though it hardly needs emphasis, our firm conviction that the United Nations is the only forum that has both the legal and political capacity to address the manifold issues that confront the world today. We reaffirm our stand that all-out efforts must be made to further strengthen this great institution. The weakening of the United Nations would amount to the weakening of world security, peace and stability as a whole.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

The prime objective of the United Nations today is to devise and sustain mechanisms to preserve world peace and save future generations from the scourge of war. One of the most important steps towards that noble objective is disarmament. At the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament we had the opportunity to review the issues related to disarmament, freely and frankly, from all perspectives. Arms control, especially the prohibition of nuclear arms, must be considered with the utmost seriousness. Similarly, any trends towards developing more conventional weapons, producing chemical and biological weapons and militarizing outer space should remain a matter of concern; they must be prevented by all possible means. A reduction of arms will greatly reduce tension and promote greater stability and confidence. The ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shows that comprehensive disarmament is no longer a Utopian concept and that, given the political will and determination required, a better tomorrow in a new world could be built.

We have witnessed a breakthrough for the increased use of outer space because of the rapid progress in science and technology. It is therefore essential that strong safeguards be laid down well in advance, so that outer space is used only for peaceful purposes. Agreements and mechanisms on a global scale should be devised urgently in order effectively to set down the guidelines, formulate the safeguards and regulate the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We are firmly convinced of the usefulness of the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. That concept implies regional harmony and peace. Setting up such zones would facilitate the reduction of the tension and mistrust that often exist among countries of a region. The

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

Republic of Maldives is strongly of the view that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace would contribute substantially to achieving the objective of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Maldives has always supported the General Assembly resolutions calling for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia. We reiterate our stand that participation by all countries of the region and other countries concerned with the issue, as well as consultations among them, is essential for the establishment of an effective nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

Maldives strongly supports the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, free from outside interference, military activities and influence. Maldives attaches great importance to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1971. It is our firm belief that sincere bilateral and multilateral consultations will have a positive result. In that connection, we call for the implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, including the call for the early convening of the proposed international conference on the issue.

While most of the world is advancing towards the objective of sharing the benefits of our common heritage, it is disheartening to note that some people are moving backwards with the remnants of past ages.

The pursuit of the policy of apartheid by the white minority régime in power in South Africa is a disgrace to the world community. South Africa's persistent disregard of the world condemnation of its racist policies leads us to believe that it is time to examine and adopt more stringent measures and enforce the United Nations resolutions on South Africa. Some nations' support, direct or indirect, for the racist régime of South Africa, merely to serve their own interests, also deserves criticism. Let us collectively urge the Security Council to resort to

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter, if necessary, and put an end to the apartheid régime and the illegal occupation of Namibia.

We pledge our support to the front-line States in their difficult efforts to deal with the destabilization caused by South Africa and to cope with the effects of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. We appeal to the international community generously to support the Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid (AFRICA) Fund proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement, which reflects the universal battle to achieve the total elimination of the system of apartheid.

The situation in Angola and in southern Africa appears to be improving. We welcome the cease-fire declared by the parties concerned and their agreement on a sequence of steps necessary to prepare the way for the independence of Namibia in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and to achieve peace in south-western Africa. It is essential, however, that all parties directly concerned with the issue, and in particular the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which is the legitimate representative of the people of South West Africa/Namibia, be included in the negotiations. The direct and full involvement of the United Nations in the talks and negotiations is also essential to achieving a lasting solution.

One of the most positive developments of this year has been the acceptance by the parties concerned of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which called for an end to the Iran-Iraq war. Maldives welcomed that new development, and strongly supports the subsequent cease-fire and the direct talks between the two countries which began on 25 August 1988. These developments were particularly significant and commendable since they came at a time when this destructive war had assumed alarming proportions. We earnestly hope that Iran and Iraq will exercise

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

constraint and continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General until a lasting and honourable solution to the conflict is found.

The situation in occupied Palestine continues to deteriorate. The Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza has only confirmed the severity and intensity of the situation created by the Israeli aggression. The uprising is a further demonstration of the popular will, another link in the long chain of resistance that began with the very first days of occupation - but it is much more persistent and intense, and people from all walks of life, young and old, are participating in it in a unified effort and a common struggle to achieve freedom and independence.

The Government of Maldives strongly condemns the use of brutal force and the abuse of human rights by Israel against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. We also deplore Israel's continued defiance of United Nations resolutions, against all norms of international law. We reiterate our full support for and solidarity with the people of Palestine in their just struggle for independence and self-determination and the liberation of their homeland from Zionist occupation. We also welcome the overwhelming international support for the uprising, which is being viewed as the just struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their usurped legitimate rights and the attainment of full independence. We also support the proposal for the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East, with the full and independent participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which remains the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Such a conference would, we believe, constitute a major step towards the solution of the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

The situation in Lebanon remains tense and extremely dangerous. Lebanon's legal identity and sovereignty have been reduced to a shambles. With about 13 years of civil and proxy wars and the illegal occupation by Israel of its territory, Lebanon now faces the disaster of a complete breakdown. Every day the toll of victims rises owing to the indiscriminate bombing by Israel and other acts of violence. It is fervently hoped that with the developments taking place in the region the question of Lebanon can be solved in a manner that will restore its sovereignty and alleviate the suffering of its people.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

With the signing of the Geneva Accords a peaceful solution to the problem of Afghanistan finally seems to be in sight. So far, the schedule for the withdrawal of foreign troops is being followed satisfactorily. It is hoped that a political settlement will soon follow. We call upon all parties concerned to abide strictly by the provisions of the Accords in order not to frustrate the present opportunities to achieve a just and lasting solution to that complex problem. We hope that the United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programme relating to Afghanistan will respond to the immediate need for relief and rehabilitation as well as to the long-term requirements for the reconstruction of the country.

Similarly, initiatives to bring about peace in Kampuchea are also having positive results. The recent negotiations at Bogor, Indonesia, are a significant breakthrough, and we hope that a peaceful settlement, based on national reconciliation and the withdrawal of foreign troops, will be forthcoming, leading to the restoration and preservation of Kampuchea's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutral and non-aligned status and to the reaffirmation of the Kampuchean people's right to determine their own destiny.

History has revealed unequivocally that the arbitrary division of nations does not preserve peace and stability but that, on the contrary, it acts as a catalyst to continuing tension and agony. The Maldives has been consistently supportive of the efforts of nations separated by war to achieve reunification. The process of reunification should operate through peaceful means and through the creation of conditions for reconciliation, peace and stability among peoples sharing the same aspirations.

We are optimistic about the prospects for reunification and national reconciliation in Korea. The Maldives reiterates its firm belief that that can be

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

achieved only through peaceful and direct dialogue and negotiations between the peoples concerned, without outside interference. The good offices of the United Nations can be utilized in such peaceful negotiations.

While supporting the independence and national integrity of Cyprus, Maldives considers that intercommunal talks are vital to a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within the framework of national unity, justice and equal rights for all Cypriots. We are encouraged by the positive attitude displayed by the leaders of the Cypriot communities in their recent meetings in London, and we earnestly hope that a durable solution to that difficult problem will be found. In that regard we once again commend the valuable efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to bring about a peaceful solution to the problem.

The question of Western Sahara is yet another that is of concern to us. We hope that the recent initiatives of the Secretary-General with regard to that issue will bring about a lasting solution to the problem.

Although Central America is geographically distant from us, the situation there continues to be a cause of concern. We strongly deplore the acts of aggression and intervention that threaten or jeopardize the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political stability of the peoples of that region and their rights to self-determination and freedom. We support the Georgetown Peace Appeal of March 1987, and we also welcome the initiatives of the Central American leaders and their peace agreement signed in August 1987. In that context we urge and appeal to all States to co-operate in the implementation of the Esquipulas II agreement and to refrain from supporting subversive activities and other acts of intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, which only produce destruction and misery for the innocent population.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

Forty-three years have gone by since the adoption of the United Nations Charter, which, among other things, recognized the rights of peoples to self-determination and freedom. With regard to the question of New Caledonia we reiterate our broad support for the rights of the people to self-determination in accordance with international law. It will be recalled that at its forty-second session the General Assembly had noted that progress towards a long-term political solution in New Caledonia required a free and genuine act of self-determination and the Assembly had called for resumption of the dialogue with all sections of the population of the Territory. We welcome the initiatives announced by the French Government and hope that the proposed plans will guarantee fairness and equality to all sectors of the population.

The world economic situation continues to be grim. The gap between rich and poor is widening. Some of the industrial countries pursue policies that have a negative impact on the economies of the developing countries. Furthermore, in the past couple of years many of the developing countries have been faced with such serious natural calamities as droughts, floods, torrential rains and earthquakes. Against such a backdrop it is disturbing that there is a decline in official development aid to developing countries. It is also a matter for regret that the official development aid (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product called for in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the ODA target of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries remain unfulfilled. It is therefore essential to initiate a rethinking of the international development strategy and to implement the call for the new international economic order. It is regrettable that progress towards the establishment of a new international economic order has been unsatisfactory, owing mainly to the lack of political will on the

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

part of some of the developed countries to implement the decisions. In the mean time, the efforts of the developing countries in their own development processes have been commendable.

Most of the developing countries face huge debts, declining commodity prices, reduced flows of development capital and adverse terms of trade. For a healthy global economy it is essential that developing countries be given a fairer opportunity for economic rehabilitation and growth. We are optimistic that technical and economic co-operation among developing countries will show a further upward trend in coming years and will go a long way towards mitigating the adverse economic conditions they face today. The promotion of South-South trade within the broader context of economic co-operation among developing countries, based on principles of collective self-reliance, has been stressed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We urge the United Nations to take more effective and concrete steps to promote both economic and technical co-operation among developing countries in the course of its programme of action regarding the new international economic order. In that context we welcome the decision taken at the ministerial meeting on the global system of trade preferences for developing countries at Belgrade in April 1988, which has given new impetus to the ongoing negotiations.

May I finally turn to a subject to which Maldives attaches great importance and which is of vital concern to us, namely, the protection and preservation of the environment. With almost blind faith in his ability and power to conquer nature and equipped with ever more sophisticated technology, man has unwittingly and to some extent unknowingly been destroying his basic life-support system. Our planet Earth can be compared to a small spaceship on which we are all travelling together, dependent for survival upon the vulnerable supply of air, water and soil and their

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

balanced exploitation. The delicate equilibrium of air, water and soil is being threatened by increasing pollution by man. Man's action over the years has transmuted the natural order of the environment to the point where the whole world is ensnared in the consequences. As the scale of man's intervention in nature has increased, so have nature's repercussions on man. Today the world is faced with risks of irreversible damage to the environment - land, air and sea - that threatens the very life-support systems of the Earth.

Maldives is a small, archipelagic State entirely dependent upon its seas for its livelihood. Any degradation of the marine ecosystem or any rise in the mean sea-level due to the so-called greenhouse effect is a matter for grave concern to us. Last year, it may be recalled, the Maldives witnessed the fury of tidal eruptions three times, and suffered extensive damage. Tidal waves, hurricanes and typhoons are becoming increasingly frequent phenomena. Scientists may attribute such natural havoc as the consequence of man's unscrupulous tampering with the environment. It is already well established that the pollution of the atmosphere by industrial effluents, by gaseous substances and especially by chlorofluorocarbons is damaging the earth's protective ozone layer. Damage to the ozone layer will result in greater heating of the Earth, melting the ice caps in the polar regions and leading to a consequent rise in the global mean sea-level. Such a result can be disastrous to low-lying island States like Maldives.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

The Maldives is particularly concerned about any damage to the marine environment and the question of the sea-level rise. The immediate effects and the threats of nature on countries like the Maldives may not be as frightful and gloomy as described and dramatized by some newspaper reports. Our tourist attractions and the fishing activities will remain intact, and these two vital industries may prosper for many decades to come without the fear of the country being drowned. Nevertheless we have embarked upon a programme of protecting the populated islands from possible natural calamities. We thank the friendly countries, particularly Japan, for assisting us in this initiative and for their interest in the problem.

Maldives therefore strongly supports the call for environmental preservation and is already a party to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. We urge all States to care lovingly for the environment and we reiterate the old maxim that prevention is better than cure.

In conclusion, allow me to express the sincere hope of my delegation that this session of the General Assembly will further contribute to consolidating world peace and maintaining the positive atmosphere and the momentum achieved during the past year towards the noble principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. NISSIM-ISSACHAROFF (Israel): My delegation would like to reply to the statement made yesterday by the Foreign Minister of Syria.

First, we find it wholly inappropriate, but not unexpected, that the Foreign Minister of Syria should raise the matter of impending elections in Israel and elsewhere in these deliberations. These are clearly internal matters beyond the confines of the work of the United Nations. It would seem, however, that of late Syria has become somewhat of an expert in interfering in the internal democratic processes of other countries, as it has done in Lebanon, meeting with very little success and only contributing to the constitutional turmoil and uncertainty in that country. In truth, I think this evident lack of success on Syria's behalf is in no small part due to the fundamental lack of any Syrian understanding or appreciation of any democratic political process. In Syria there are no real political parties; there are no genuine elections; and, more important, there has never been any Syrian political platform accepting a viable political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Foreign Minister of Syria, in his statement, called for an international conference for peace in the Middle East. This call did not, of course, even refer to any direct negotiations between, for example, Syria and Israel; it did not mention mutual recognition and the signing of peace treaties between Israel and its neighbours, or the establishment of normal relations between all the States in the area. If this is the so-called peace which Syria seeks, it not only deludes itself but also attempts clearly to mislead this Assembly.

Syria has never formulated any political platform which entails peace with Israel within one conceptual framework. In contrast, successive Israeli Governments have been committed and willing to negotiate directly, without pre-conditions, with Israel's neighbours on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) in order to attain a political solution to

(Mr. Nissim-Issacharoff, Israel)

the Arab-Israeli conflict. Syria is clearly unwilling to accept such a straightforward and simple proposition.

Regarding the remarks of the Foreign Minister of Syria on Lebanon that Syria is interested in preserving Lebanon's unity and maintaining its independence, I find it curious that he failed to mention that Syria continues to occupy 60 per cent of Lebanon, with about 35,000 Syrian troops in that country. I am sure this must have slipped his mind, so to speak, though subconsciously when he talked of Lebanon and Syria as having a common destiny, a mutual interest, an interdependent security, no one, least of all the Lebanese, should have any doubt as to the nature of that common destiny, namely, unconditional Syrian control of Lebanon.

Syria is perhaps the last country in this Assembly that should talk of Lebanon's unity and independence. Syria has never recognized Lebanon as an independent country and continues to view Lebanon as merely another part of Syria. I would invite the Syrian representative to correct me if I am wrong, but I am sure that he will not.

On 17 May 1983, Israel and Lebanon signed an agreement which called for the mutual respect of each other's sovereignty, security arrangements along our borders, which were to be inviolable, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, to which we agreed. That agreement was not implemented but was abrogated by Lebanon at the behest of Syria. Just as the Syrians would never sign any such agreement with Lebanon, they prevented the implementation of the May 1983 agreement, which could have adequately regulated the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The lesson of that is that Lebanon, in Syrian eyes, can have no independent foreign or national policy carried out by a strong central Lebanese Government. This is the real tragedy of Lebanon.

Mr. VILLAR (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Spain has taken note of the references made to the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla in the statement made this afternoon by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco. My delegation considers that those references are inappropriate because they raise a question which is not on the agenda of the Assembly. They are untimely and, in the view of my delegation, they are not in keeping with the good relations that now exist between our two countries.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.