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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 12 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina)
later: Mr. VAN LEIROP (Vanuatu)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Acevedo (Paraguay)
Mr. Sey (Gambia)
Mr. Muliuro (Kenya)
Mr. Ndong (Equatorial Guinea)
Mr. Peters (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ACEVEDO (Paraguay) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset of this statement before the forty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we extend our respectful greetings to the President, Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister of Foreign Relations and Worship of the Republic of Argentina, and we sincerely hope that, under his wise guidance, this session will be crowned with success and result in meaningful solutions towards international peace and security.

Similarly, we hail our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to whom we express our gratitude for his tireless and fruitful efforts for peace at a time when his worthy endeavours have brought the world lofty victories that lend this Organization a role of universal leadership.

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Just recognition of these efforts is clearly expressed by the recent award of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, to our great satisfaction.

Since 1945 the Republic of Paraguay has never doubted that the world needs an Organization respected by all States, based on international law and the noble principles of justice, peace and security, which would at all times guarantee the peaceful settlement of disputes, continuing social and economic development, respect for the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, and other no less important principles, such as the territorial integrity of States and the equality of all countries under the law.

We have never understood the position of those States which, forgetting their moral obligations to the Organization, do not take advantage of this forum for the settlement of international conflicts, thus depriving the United Nations of its leading role, which must be recognized because of the purposes for which it was founded.

Today our hopes are rising once more because the importance of the United Nations is being recognized with new understanding wherever problems of international law have to be solved, thanks to the productive work of the Secretary-General and his special representatives and to the change of attitude which at last seems to have occurred, so that States are prepared to reach solutions to their disputes with the help of our Organization.

On behalf of the Republic of Paraguay, I wish to express our satisfaction at the good news that preceded the opening of this session of the General Assembly of the possibility of chronic conflicts being solved through the effective intervention of our Organization. We hope that time will prove that we are right, that what now presents itself as merely the glimmer of a solution will become an effective reality, to the benefit of all peoples, and that it may be said once

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again that there was a moment in history when Governments gave the United Nations effective means of solving problems that had seemed insoluble. Such is the case with regard to the Persian Gulf war; the gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; the possibility that foreign soldiers will be withdrawn from Cambodia; the possibility of a peace agreement between Angola, Cuba and the Republic of South Africa; and the beginning of a dialogue, in auspicious conditions, between the two communities in Cyprus.

I cannot do better than recall here certain passages from the statement made in this forum by the President of the Republic of Paraguay, General Alfredo Stroessner, at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. He said:

"I am honoured to bring to this lofty forum the voice of the Republic of Paraguay, the thinking of a nation truly dedicated to peace, which shares universal ideals of security, freedom, justice and development.

"...

"The Republic of Paraguay firmly upholds the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, the legal equality of nations and the self-determination of peoples.

"In all international forums we maintain clear positions in favour of relations between nations based on fair legal principles of mutual respect and co-operation.

"In the United Nations and in the Organization of American States (OAS), we uphold the principles of friendship and co-operation, with full confidence in the beneficial results that accrue whenever relations between States are established with goodwill and in a spirit of solidarity.

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"At all international events, conferences and meetings we speak the constructive language of peace, thus projecting the reality being led by the Republic of Paraguay.

"Paraguayan constitutional law takes as its essential principles respect for international law; condemnation of wars of aggression and conquest and all forms of colonialism and imperialism; the peaceful settlement of international disputes by lawful means; respect for human rights and the sovereignty of peoples; and the aspiration to live at peace with all nations."

(A/S-15/PV.8, pp. 3, 4)

The desire of the peoples for a genuine peace that will improve their relations with each other is universal. Nations, without exception, cherish international law and view with concern the unilateral decisions taken by certain States in their relations with other countries, which damage not only the prestige of the United Nations but also the essential principles of its Charter, the purpose of whose adoption was to banish the evil of war, injustice, the predominance of brute force, foreign intervention in the affairs of other States, and all the other evils that affect the relations between peoples.

My country takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the whole United Nations system for the work it does in all areas, and especially for the efforts made on behalf of land-locked countries with a relatively low degree of development. We are grateful for the continuing assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which has carried out and follows up so many projects all over the world to meet the need for technology to be at the disposal of less developed countries. At the risk of repeating ourselves, we must say that this victory of our times puts an inescapable moral obligation on the wealthiest countries at a time when extreme poverty robs men of their dignity in so many parts of the world.

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The poor in Latin America number 173 million. Of this number, in 1985, 61 million lived in extreme poverty. If this trend continues, the poor in Latin America will number 204 million by 1990, according to the UNDP. That body also says that there is a social debt of \$280 million - the sum that these countries would have to invest to eradicate poverty.

These really shocking figures must, of course, be seen in relation to the foreign debt problem of the countries of Latin America, at a time when development demands new investments, and the prices of raw materials from the developing world are not remunerative. Although the Republic of Paraguay, fortunately, is not in the same situation as many other countries of the region, we feel complete solidarity with all those who see their future jeopardized by this problem, which is so radically bound up with development and the improvement of living standards. This problem requires not only economic but also political solutions which recognize the moral obligation of the super-industrialized world to the less developed countries. In 1987 the regional foreign debt amounted to \$410 billion, and in the last five years the continent has remitted \$150 billion to the international banking system just for debt servicing, amortization and interest, without reducing the capital debt, which in fact has increased because of new loans, in a dangerous race between attempts to improve the life of the majority of our peoples and the unfair distribution of income between North and South.

The problem of the foreign debt is so serious that recent United Nations reports advise creditors to reduce the amounts owed by up to 30 per cent, because otherwise there will be no possibility of fulfilling commitments or resolving satisfactorily the problems deriving from this troubling question. Highly specialized Latin American technical organizations have expressed the opinion that solution of the foreign debt problem is very closely related to an increase of

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trade in the region and a substantial improvement in the prices for commodities at which the debtor countries sell to the industrialized world.

The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization deserves our praise. We are familiar with the Secretary-General's commitment to fulfil his difficult and noble responsibilities as a man of peace, conciliation and dialogue at the international level. There are always factors which undermine world order and peace and which are not precisely within the area of competence of the United Nations, but time has shown that selfish, unilateral decisions are becoming more rare, especially in the light of what is happening at the present time, which shows that the work of the Organization and the Secretary-General is having positive results, despite the many difficulties on the thorny path of peace, justice and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

(Mr. Acevedo, Paraguay)

The Republic of Paraguay is experiencing an encouraging growth in its economy. For example, the rate of growth of our gross national product, which was 4.3 per cent in 1987, has reached almost 6 per cent this year as a consequence of good prospects, basically in the agricultural sector. Therefore, despite the adverse world economic conditions, the Republic of Paraguay - according to a report by the World Bank - is among the countries with the highest average rate of growth during the past two decades. Sources in the Economic Commission for Latin America confirm that the cumulative growth rate of the gross national product from 1980 to 1987 was 16.9 per cent - one of the highest rates among the Latin American non-oil-exporting countries.

This forward movement of the Paraguayan economy is the result of putting into effect a plan to give an impetus to the economy; that has been done with discipline and austerity, in a climate of peace and serenity.

The economic and financial strategy and the great efforts that have been exerted have had and still have the objective of achieving continuing development, to counteract the adverse trends in the terms of trade, the burden of amortizations and interest payments, and the low investment inflow. Those factors compel all the developing countries to take strong economic adjustment measures.

Nevertheless, despite the unsteady evolution of the world economy owing to restrictions on international trade and the Latin American external-debt problems, the Republic of Paraguay continues its efforts to promote a better quality of life, education and public health within the country; it also continues to encourage agricultural and industrial development as well as doing a great deal of work on the basic infrastructure. On the other hand, because of the brotherly ties of friendship between my country and its neighbours, we have in mind large-scale integration projects which will have a broad and favourable impact on development within Latin America. In that regard, it should be noted that, with the beginning

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of the commercial operation of turbines 12 and 13, envisaged for the end of this year, Itaipu - the largest dam in the world, built jointly with the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil - will generate 9,100,000 kilowatts. Similarly, there has been no interruption in the construction of the Yacireta hydroelectric dam on the Parana River, with a power of 4,050,000 kilowatts, or the construction of an international 2,600-metre bridge, which is now nearing completion. Both projects are being carried out in conjunction with the Argentine Republic. These large undertakings have already had the following positive effects: the availability of abundant electric power; possibilities for electro-intensive industries and the export of the energy from those industries; the electrification of villages and towns in the interior of the country, from which 289 communities have so far benefited.

We should also emphasize the facilities that are granted to us by brotherly countries in free ports such as Paranagua and Rio Grande do Sur in Brazil, Rosario and Buenos Aires in Argentina, Nueva Palmira and Montevideo in Uruguay, Antofagasta in Chile, and Matarani in Peru; the latter two are on the Pacific coast.

I mention those examples of growth, efforts and sacrifices in order to demonstrate the vigour of a Government that is aware of its responsibilities and is seeking a quality of life for its people that is in keeping with the progress of our civilization.

On 15 August this year, a new period in the life of the Government began, in conformity with the national Constitution. That Constitution was promulgated in 1967; it was the undisputed product of the National Constituent Assembly, made up of four political parties. The elections for the five-year period 1988 to 1993 were free and direct, in accordance with the provisions of the electoral law. The right to vote was exercised, as usual, with many options and within the specific

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time-limit established by the law. The three branches of State power are functioning freely, and the nation is moving towards the attainment of better goals of progress and development in a multi-party environment open to all democratic political trends that are in keeping with legal rules that are the same for everyone.

The Persian Gulf war has been and still is a matter of concern to the Republic of Paraguay. It appears that the war has come to an end, thanks to the skilful negotiations carried out by the Secretary-General and to the moral authority of our Organization. We applaud the good spirit shown by the parties involved, who have rejected intolerance and chosen, instead, conciliatory dialogue. The Republic of Paraguay hopes that these efforts will succeed, so that world peace may be strengthened.

Another cardinal subject among the international conflicts threatening international peace and security continues to be the thorny question of Afghanistan. That question can be summed up as armed intervention by a super-Power that shows contempt for the principles of the self-determination of peoples and non-intervention in the internal affairs of nations. The news about the gradual withdrawal of the occupying troops indicates another extraordinary achievement by the United Nations. That is a source of satisfaction to the international community and a sign that international practice is again moving towards respect for the sovereignty of States, in accordance with another principle: the juridical equality of nations. We hope that the withdrawal of all the troops will soon be a fact, for the sake of the institutions on which the ethical order of international life and respect among nations is based.

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We note with interest the developments in the informal talks that were held recently, at the request of Indonesia and other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, to consider the serious problem of Kampuchea in the context of the search for a long-term political solution in keeping with the resolutions of our Organization. The withdrawal of the foreign military forces remains the pre-condition for the restoration of Kampuchea's sovereignty, independence and self-determination.

The problems of the Middle East and Lebanon persist. There has still been no positive response to efforts by the international community to restore peaceful and tolerant coexistence to that region. In response to the call for a peace conference concerning the region, dissident voices have been raised alleging that such a peace conference would be useless; but no suggestions have been made for an alternative under which the parties could give up their radical, conflicting positions. The Republic of Paraguay repeats that any arrangement that is reached must be in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), and that two fundamental principles must be respected in any resolution that may be adopted: full recognition of the sovereign existence of the State of Israel, and the Palestinian people's right to exist and to have a homeland. The problem of Lebanon continues to be of concern to all men and women in the world. It is time to end this irrational war that has destroyed a country which was a centre of peace and progress but in which today there is an ever-increasing spirit of belligerency and destruction.

The recent events with regard to the Cyprus question open up encouraging prospects for the solution of the problem, as the Secretary-General points out in his report. The parties have resumed their talks, and with the good offices which the Security Council has requested the Secretary-General to exercise, commitments to co-operate have been made. The Republic of Paraguay very much hopes that

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through direct dialogue between the parties, and with the Secretary-General following up the progress achieved in the preliminary stages, the fundamental objective desired by the international community can be achieved - that is, to see the people of Cyprus living in peace and harmony within the concert of nations.

The Government of the Republic of Paraguay, in accordance with a tradition that has not varied since it participated in the founding of the United Nations, will lend its solidarity and co-operation to any initiatives that obtain the required consensus to be put into effect, for the good of the Organization and the international community - initiatives ranging from the financial strengthening of the institution to the peaceful solution of the various problems with which it is confronted.

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The position of Paraguay on human rights has always been one based on justice without giving offence, with a view to maintaining the highest levels of coexistence between Governments and nations. Similarly, the right to life, liberty and property are and will continue to be guaranteed by the terms of the Constitution and by law, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Republic of Paraguay has in all forums always rejected both the nuclear and the conventional arms race, since it entails wasting billions of dollars while there is an urgent need for economic and social development. International security, the process of development and peace based on respect for the dignity of all nations, law and the right to life can be achieved only by the cessation of the arms race both in the rich industrialized countries and in countries that need these resources to promote their development.

Another scourge on mankind that negatively affects the very structure of human life is terrorism. This practice continues to undermine the moral order of human existence and its fatal consequences have shocked nations that cherish peace, order and respect for human life without distinction of any kind, such as nationality, colour, origin or opinion. It is time to be frank and ask ourselves whether our countries and our Organization have done enough to put an end to this horrendous scourge, for there is nothing so cowardly in the world and in the history of mankind as the murder of innocent human beings under the pretext of calling attention to certain issues that cannot be resolved in this way, by destroying man and his social institutions. The Republic of Paraguay, which has not experienced this madness that is terrorism or armed violence, urges all Member States which usually blame the existence of this evil on underlying causes to change their attitude and unreservedly support all initiatives to eliminate terrorism from the world.

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There is only one alternative for our Organization: either all countries agree to combat this cruel and bloody practice with all the force of morality and law or the Organization will lose its prestige and credibility before the peoples of the world, who see in the United Nations a valuable and irreplaceable instrument for putting an end to international terrorism.

My country's Government is combating the scourge of drugs with all its legal and moral strength. As the President of Paraguay, General Alfredo Stroessner, said before the General Assembly:

"With the Constitution and the laws, we are confronting those who are trying to weaken our free institutions, the detestable agents of that social cancer, the drug traffic." (A/S-15/PV.8, p. 11)

Our country has joined world efforts to eliminate this pernicious activity. It took part in the last Vienna Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and is giving full effect to the Declaration and broad plan of action which emanated from that international conference. Our legislative branch is currently engaged in preparing a new law to suppress drug trafficking, for we know that our legislation must reflect this sad moment for mankind which is destabilizing its free institutions and corrupting the human person.

We firmly believe that our Organization has now reached a high point in its activities for international peace and security. We trust that its valuable co-operation with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Latin American Economic System (SELA) will continue to increase in the quest for a better future for our region and for all the world, for no one doubts the need for the existence and activities of regional organizations.

(Mr. Acevedo, Paraguay)

The Republic of Korea has always been a country under international strict juridical order, respecting the law, ethical norms and international law. My Government understands that there is no obstacle standing in the way of its admission to the Organization, while keeping open the possibility for the People's Republic of Korea to do likewise. This request is justified by the fact that the United Nations must become increasingly universal, without any exceptions.

We fully appreciate what the law of the sea means to the world in the context of an increasingly interdependent and participating international community where countries are seeking agreements on improving the use of the resources of the sea without discrimination. My country firmly believes that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is proof of the progress made by mankind towards fairer goals. The Republic of Paraguay ratified that international instrument and will support its applicability in all forums of the world.

The world is closely following the work of this session of the General Assembly in this crucial time for the peaceful coexistence of peoples, when the media are reporting the activities of the Organization with regard to well-known hotbeds of conflict, death, desolation, misery and pain.

It is necessary to redouble our efforts in order to promote peace and security and overcome understandable differences and existing ideologies, united in our desire to serve mankind, making sure that the terror of war - and the next war could indeed be the last if nuclear weapons are used - will never again grip the world. Let us continue together in the search for a future of love and understanding between men and peoples where no room is left for the hatred that kills, the hunger that undermines the dignity of the King of Creation, the terror that petrifies and converts us into wild beasts, and the intolerance that denigrates

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the moral quality of life in society. That is the only hope left to us in view of the arsenals that have been built up in the world. It is up to us, through conciliation, to convert this aspiration into reality.

We trust that the Supreme Creator will enlighten us and give us the necessary moral strength to continue to work for a world of peace and justice.

Mr. SEY (Gambia): I wish to extend to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the Gambian delegation on your election to the high office of President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I am sure that with your diplomatic skills and ability, as exemplified by your illustrious career, you will guide the deliberations of this important session to a successful conclusion. In the discharge of your duties you can count on the full co-operation of my delegation.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's profound thanks and gratitude to Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for the efficient and businesslike manner in which he conducted the deliberations of the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

Permit me also to pay a special tribute to our indefatigable Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his laudable efforts in the promotion of international co-operation and his devotion to the search for peace among nations.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

The decision of the Nobel Committee to award the 1988 Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces deserves our praise and admiration. This well-deserved recognition is also a testimony to the dedication and courage of the thousands of men and women spread around the globe and fully committed to the aims and ideals of the Charter of the Organization. The United Nations family deserves to be congratulated.

Last year at this time, when the forty-second session of the General Assembly convened, the world was still caught in a web of escalating tensions and regional conflicts. In some areas, these conflicts took on higher intensity and wider involvement, fuelled with even more destructive weapons. The cost, both in material and in human terms, became incalculable, and unprecedented since the last World War.

From the heat of the Sahara to the lush greenery of southern Angola, from the Shatt al-Arab waterway to the rugged mountains of Afghanistan and into the plains of Indochina, the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes became illusive. It seemed as if the world had forgotten the solemn declaration of the United Nations founding fathers that they were determined "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Indeed, conflicts, disputes and a general state of instability continued to prevail. But, at last, there is today a glimmer of hope in the international atmosphere for the resolution of several long-outstanding conflicts and disputes. In fact, recent developments in many troubled areas have opened up new possibilities for the peaceful settlement of disputes and for co-operative coexistence among nations.

Who would have believed, only a year ago, that during this session we would all be basking in the genuine hope of a more stable world, because of the remarkable achievement of a super-Power agreement actually to destroy a whole class of nuclear weapons? Perhaps, by this act, mankind has finally taken that important

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first step away from the threat of a nuclear conflict. With the present spirit of co-operation, my delegation is confident that this is just the first step, and that the best is yet to come. As the Chinese saying goes, "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step."

At their last summit in Moscow earlier this year, President Reagan of the United States and President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union laid a solid foundation for a realistic approach to the question of peace, stability and the reduction of the risk of global conflicts. The whole world notes with satisfaction their determination to prevent the risk of war, whether nuclear or conventional.

As the result of a remarkable series of initiatives and of greater understanding, both super-Powers have contributed greatly to the transformation of the world political situation. The new climate of mutual respect, understanding and dialogue has opened the door to more meaningful advances in the efforts of all nations, especially the super-Powers, to strive for a world without nuclear weapons.

My delegation welcomes the fact that disarmament has been a major theme in world politics during the last 12 months. We remain hopeful that the United Nations will continue to play its rightful role in creating the atmosphere for meaningful dialogue and that all current negotiations on this important issue will be expeditiously and successfully concluded. It is also the hope of my delegation that greater attention will be given to increased security in a wider sense, namely, in the release of human and material resources for redeployment on social and economic programmes for the general welfare of all underprivileged peoples around the world.

In his statement to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in June this year, the President of the Gambia, His Excellency Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, addressed this issue of the

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unfortunate competition in the allocation of available resources for armaments and development as follows:

"The allocation of massive resources for armaments is simply a major constraint on the development process, as armaments and development both tend to compete for the same limited resources. Given the general global economic and financial crises, reduced military spending could contribute significantly not only to an increased flow of development assistance to developing countries, but also to an improved climate for global economic growth. We should therefore work tirelessly to ensure that the progress made in disarmament results in increased attention to economic and social development matters and in particular to increased assistance to developing countries. Remote as the chances for this may seem at the moment, we should continue to strive for this important transition, and I would urge that the General Assembly give this important question particular attention at this special session." (A/S-15/PV.9, p. 12)

The current climate of peace, of renewed hope and optimism, is not only evident in the search for a more stable and sustainable relationship between the two super-Powers: it has, as we all know, reached the other areas of conflict around the world.

In Afghanistan, foreign troops that have occupied that country for eight years are now withdrawing. We hope that the signing of the Geneva agreements and the total withdrawal of foreign troops will create conditions that will enable the Afghan refugees to return to their country in safety and dignity. In this way, all Afghans can sit together and chart their own destiny without any external influence.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the positive and responsible attitude adopted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Despite the threat to its security, which emanated from the presence of

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foreign troops in neighbouring Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan gallantly provided shelter and relief to over 3 million refugees in accordance with universally recognized humanitarian principles.

We have also been following with keen interest the developments in the Gulf region, mainly because of our genuine desire for peace. In fact, as we all know, the President of the Republic of the Gambia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Peace Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, has since 1984 been actively involved in the difficult task of trying to bring an end to the Gulf war and to create better understanding between the brotherly peoples of Iran and Iraq. Fortunately, recent developments in the area have generated much optimism. This conflict has caused immense suffering to the populations of the two countries. It is our fervent hope that the cessation of hostilities and the current initiatives of the Secretary-General will lead to an honourable resolution of all the outstanding issues without further delay.

In South-East Asia, we welcome and applaud the initiatives of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which culminated in the recent Jakarta informal meeting, and its endeavour to find a solution to the Kampuchean problem. We appeal to all sides concerned to explore all possible avenues for the restoration of the rights of the Kampuchean people, while at the same time ensuring the legitimate interests of all the countries in the region to live in peace with one another.

Our support for the current search for a solution is based on the principle that no country should be permitted to define its security in a way that creates insecurity for others.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

The presence of foreign troops in Kampuchea and the repeated incursions into Thai territory have heightened tension and posed security problems in the region. It has also transformed a large section of the Kampuchean population into refugees and placed an intolerable burden upon neighbouring countries of first asylum, particularly Thailand.

Like the rest of the international community, the Gambia is committed to the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. This would allow the Kampuchean people to determine their own future, with the full participation of all Kampuchians.

In the Korean peninsula, we continue to support genuine efforts for the peaceful reunification of North Korea and South Korea, in the best interest of both parties. In this regard, a meaningful dialogue is the key to a lasting solution and must therefore be vigorously pursued. Pending reunification, however, my delegation will support the admission of both North Korea and South Korea to the United Nations, based on the principle of universality.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, the international community must ensure that the already explosive situation in that area is not immune from the prevailing climate of peace, dialogue and understanding. Developments in the occupied territories over the last few months have proved beyond doubt that the time has come for the prevailing winds of peaceful change to blow in this area. While there is anxiety over the need for all States in the region to live within secure and recognized boundaries, we should admit that it is equally important to emphasize that realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a homeland of their own is long overdue.

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We, in the Gambia, will therefore continue to support the Palestinian people in their heroic struggle for an independent homeland. We consider the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, a very important step in the search for a genuine and lasting settlement. But if such a conference is to succeed, it must guarantee the full and effective participation of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

On the question of Cyprus, my delegation will continue to encourage the ongoing contacts and negotiations taking place under the good offices of the Secretary-General. We reiterate our hope that the two communities will continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable political settlement of the problem. In this connection, an arrangement based on the equal rights of both communities could be an ideal solution.

Let me now focus my attention on Africa. As members are aware, we in Africa have just celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The celebrations, however, took place at a most critical time in southern Africa. The celebrations also coincided with the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on Namibia, thus serving as a sombre and bleak reminder of the nature of the monstrous régime in Pretoria.

Today, there exists world-wide revulsion against the racist régime in South Africa. However, this widespread international outcry is not due to the international community suddenly realizing that apartheid is evil, violent and immoral. This growing international reaction is due to the sustained struggle being waged by progressive and democratic forces inside South Africa itself. It is the internal struggle that made South Africa the focus of attention. But in

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bringing this about, the people of South Africa and the front-line States have had to make great sacrifices. In spite of the past record, much has been made by the racist régime and its supporters of South Africa's intention to institute reforms in compliance with internationally recognized norms.

If there is any régime that qualifies to have Chapter VII of the Charter invoked, then surely it is this régime whose policies have been rightly and universally declared as a crime against humanity. We must therefore make greater efforts to support the struggle of the South African people by continuing to strive for the application of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions. The international community must find ways and means of adopting further measures designed to impress on the authorities in Pretoria the compelling urgency of dismantling apartheid and creating the structures of democracy in South Africa.

My delegation would also strongly urge the international community to provide the front-line States with such assistance as would guarantee their territorial integrity and independence. We should, however, make sure that such assistance is not simply regarded as an easy alternative to dealing with the root cause of the crises in southern Africa which, as we all know, is South Africa's ever-increasing internal repression and brutality in its futile attempts to perpetuate apartheid.

At the moment, there is steadily mounting optimism with regard to the peaceful settlement of the Namibian question. Naturally, we, in Africa, welcome the series of negotiations that have so far taken place. We hope they will eventually lead to the independence of Namibia, within the framework of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

On several occasions in the past, hopes have been raised that South Africa would bow to international public opinion and to morality by accepting the provisions of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Those hopes have been repeatedly thwarted by a defiant South Africa; hence the reason for our cautious

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optimism. We hope that this time, the international consensus on the illegality and inadmissibility of Pretoria's actions and its several military setbacks in southern Angola will ensure that South Africa stays at the negotiating table.

We all do recall that when the founding fathers of the United Nations drew up the Charter in 1945, they reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person. Besides the Charter, the United Nations has also made clear pronouncements on human rights in many fundamental texts, such as, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

As we commemorate this year the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, let us remember that all these solemn declarations and covenants recognize that freedom from want and fear can be achieved only if conditions are created whereby everyone enjoys his or her civil and political rights.

The issue of the protection and promotion of basic human rights cannot therefore be separated from the immediate problems of human survival. There is an indissoluble link between the two. Human rights is indivisible and universal, incorporating, as it were, social and economic rights, such as, the right to a decent diet, shelter and access to basic health care and educational facilities.

In view of the widening gap between the universally accepted practices of human rights and the stark realities in many parts of the world, we must make more intensive efforts to defend the rights and dignity of the individual. The Gambia does not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of any State. Our stance on human rights is motivated only by a special concern for the individual and his freedom and dignity.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

It is gratifying to note that specific steps within each region to improve the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms are particularly promising.

In Africa, important decisions have been taken towards the institutionalization of respect for and protection of human rights in the continent. As this Assembly may be aware, an Organization of African Unity (OAU) Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has now been established and the Gambia's offer to host the headquarters of the Commission has been unanimously accepted by the member States of the OAU. We believe that the confidence and trust which have been reposed in the Government and people of the Gambia are based on our firm and irrevocable commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, a commitment which is derived from the principles enshrined in both our domestic laws and our foreign policy.

Besides the decision to host the Secretariat of the OAU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, we in the Gambia are currently in the process of establishing a centre for democracy and human rights studies in order further to promote and consolidate our achievements in this area. I hasten to add that the proposed centre will be a non-governmental institution, open to all those who share the Gambia's commitment to democracy, the rule of law and the principles of freedom and the integrity of the individual.

Those are some of the more pressing political issues confronting the international community. Throughout the world there seems to be renewed commitment and hope that these political problems, despite their seeming complexity, will all some day be resolved peacefully.

But if the political climate offers some hope for the future the same cannot be said for the international economic environment. My delegation notes, with a great deal of anxiety, that our current economic crises, which pose no less of a

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

threat to international peace and security, are not being imaginatively and effectively tackled. Notwithstanding the special concern about long-term structural problems, the necessary political will to solve them is regrettably still lacking.

As a result of global recession, unfavourable terms of trade, persistent high interest rates in some developed countries and the increasing cost of debt servicing, most African countries, including the Gambia, have had to put in place a comprehensive package of reform measures in order to remove structural imbalances in our economy and establish a firm footing for recovery and development with growth.

Although there has been marked progress in redressing some major macro-economic and sectoral distortions, much still remains to be done. The Government of the Gambia is fully aware of the hardships and difficulties brought about by these domestic policy reforms, but we continue to show full determination in implementing all measures required for a speedy economic recovery and for laying the foundation for sustained long-term economic growth and prosperity.

However, it is clear that our efforts to help ourselves will fail without a new and substantial flow of financial resources on a concessionary basis. We hope that the international community will give significant support to our efforts, in conformity with the commitments made in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, adopted in 1986. It will be recalled that this Programme of Action was recently revised and reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly. My delegation sincerely hopes that at this session the Assembly will decide on the measures for overcoming the shortcomings and constraints that have been identified.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

The root cause of the current economic crisis of the developing countries has been the collapse in commodity prices. According to recent estimates, the cumulative loss for developing countries resulting from the decline in commodity prices relative to those of manufactured goods imported by them between 1980 and 1985 amounted to about \$US 50 billion. Such large losses in a period of declining official development assistance emphasizes the need for increased multilateral co-operation generally.

Nor should we lose sight of the fact that developing countries' dependence on primary commodities has remained strong, ranging between 68 per cent and almost 100 per cent. Moreover, in some cases, such as that of the Gambia, one or two primary commodities account for 90 per cent of total exports. The share of primary commodities in gross development product for the developing countries is over 30 per cent, whereas for the developed market-economy countries it is less than 10 per cent. Consequently, a decline in commodity export earnings has far-reaching implications for us, not only for current account balances but also for fiscal revenues.

One aspect of the African crisis, which could be directly linked to commodity prices and which places a premium upon the need for flexibility and a new approach towards its solution, is the problem of acute external indebtedness. Africa's economic development has been held back by debt more than by anything else.

The need for an international conference to tackle this problem is becoming even more urgent. It must be fully recognized, however, that despite the debt-relief measures adopted so far by some developed creditor countries the African debt crisis can be solved only if our economies are given the necessary impetus to grow and all debts are converted to grants.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

In addition to the restructuring of our national economies, the present crisis in Africa has focused attention on the urgent need to take further action on operating and sustaining closer subregional and regional co-operation. It cannot be overemphasized that Africa's future lies in greater co-operation and self-reliance, with a view to ensuring a balanced development, within the framework of our drive towards the total economic emancipation of Africa in consonance with the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. That is why the Government of the Gambia attaches the greatest importance to our subregional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Amidst rapid economic changes and uncertainties, ECOWAS continues to find effective ways of improving the standard of living of millions of people in our subregion. In this regard the Gambian President will, in his capacity as the current Chairman of ECOWAS, strive to give new impetus to the implementation of various programmes of subregional organizations, including the ECOWAS Economic Recovery Programme..

Still on ECOWAS matters, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Africa for organizing a training programme on conflict resolution, crisis prevention and management and confidence-building among ECOWAS States, in Lomé, Togo, from 22 August to 2 September 1988.

The programme provided a forum for communication between senior military and civilian officials of ECOWAS States responsible for issues of peace and security in their countries, especially in the practical skills and expertise needed to prevent and manage conflicts. This approach was seen as helping to break down barriers of mistrust and thereby enhance confidence among ECOWAS States.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

Both military and civilian perspectives are essential in order to have a complete view of the dynamics of problems being analysed and to establish concrete mechanisms in the future for the realization of lasting peace and security in Africa.

As a result of the success of this programme, the desire has been expressed to continue such programmes and to expand them to include other subregions of Africa.

On this important issue of peace and security in Africa it is encouraging to note that the initiatives taken by our leaders to settle the differences between Chad and Libya, Morocco and Algeria and Ethiopia and Somalia are beginning to bear fruit.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

We whole-heartedly support this approach to the peaceful settlement of disputes between the brother peoples of Africa, based on the spirit and principles of the charter of the Organization of African Unity.

At a time when all our energies are being concentrated on the twin problems of survival and growth, a new and dangerous phenomenon is beginning to cause widespread anxiety and alarm. I am, of course, referring to the totally unacceptable and irresponsible practice of dumping industrial and toxic waste in Africa. The Gambia is one of a number of countries that have been approached, but we have firmly rejected all requests for the disposal of industrial waste in our country. Given the gravity of this situation, we have also enacted very important and stringent laws to prevent the likelihood of any waste-dumping in the Gambia. And, as I have said on another occasion, despite our poverty no amount of money would lead us to agree to mortgage the future of our environment.

Over the years the Gambia has paid special attention to the better management of our environment as we endeavour to improve the standard of living of our people. In fact, about a decade ago the Government of the Gambia issued a special declaration, known as the Banjul declaration, in which we

"pledged our untiring efforts to conserve for now and posterity as wide a spectrum as possible of our remaining fauna and flora."

Furthermore, following the long period of drought and the relentless encroachment of the desert in our subregion, we in west Africa must be spared from any further form of environmental degradation.

My delegation would therefore like to support the proposal first made by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and now accepted as an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) project, for the establishment of a "dump watch", in order that countries which may be subject to the dumping of industrial waste are alerted

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

in good time to enable them to put in place all the precautionary measures necessary to safeguard their environment. The United Nations should set up a special committee that would look into the activities of industrial companies that are guilty of this crime. The countries that have been seductively subjected to the systematic pollution of their environment should also be compensated.

This is the background against which the forty-third session of the General Assembly is convening. Never have there been greater opportunities and possibilities than today for the establishment of a world free of the menace of nuclear conflagration and regional conflicts.

I should like to conclude by reassuring members of the Gambia's deep commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as to international co-operation for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people.

Let us, therefore, through collective action, rededicate ourselves to the lofty ideals and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations if we are to ensure the survival of mankind and preserve peace among nations.

Mr. MULIRO (Kenya): Mr. President, I wish at the outset to convey to you the best wishes of the President of the Republic of Kenya, the Honourable Daniel T. Arap Moi, and his hope for the success of the deliberations at the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I should also like to convey to you my delegation's and my own warm congratulations on your election to the challenging high office of the presidency of this session. Your well known diplomatic skills and wide experience guarantee the successful outcome of our discussions in this body. I pledge to you the full co-operation and support of my entire delegation in fulfilling these expectations.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

I also wish to convey to your predecessor, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Peter Florin, my delegation's appreciation of the exemplary manner in which he presided over the work of the last session of the Assembly.

The fundamental principle underlying the Charter of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. This principal objective cannot be realized without effective leadership. In the recent past the United Nations has been seen by many as having a marginal influence in solving the critical issues of the day. Indeed, the very existence of the Organization has been critically questioned. However, looking at recent events of the year, the United Nations has made important contributions to resolving regional conflicts. The cease-fire in the war between Iraq and Iran has been realized through United Nations efforts. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has come about as a result of United Nations intervention. The decision by Viet Nam to withdraw its troops from Kampuchea was prompted by repeated calls by the United Nations for Viet Nam to do so. In southern Africa, Angola, Cuba and South Africa are working on an agreement that will start the process towards the independence of Namibia in the framework of United Nations resolution 435 (1978).

While mindful of the lowering of tension between the super-Powers, we can attribute this list of successes by our Organization to the patient, strong and effective leadership given by our Secretary-General. I therefore wish to pay a warm tribute to him and to his staff for these resounding successes.

Kenya has always stated its conviction that resolution 435 (1978) remains the only basis for Namibia's independence. Therefore, while we are gratified to see the important understanding reached between Angola and Cuba on the question of the deployment of the latter's troops in Angola, we continue to hold the view that

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

Namibia's independence should not and must not be linked to the issue of Cuba's troops in Angola. The United Nations should now proceed with the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) without any further unnecessary delays.

With regard to South Africa itself, we remain gravely concerned that, despite continuous international appeals and pressures, the racist régime in that country has not released Nelson Mandela and all other political detainees, as demanded by the United Nations through its numerous resolutions.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

Moreover, the decision of the Pretoria régime to place that country under a state of emergency belies its oft-repeated assurances of commitment to real change and democratic rule in South Africa. By now it must be clear to all that the true intention of the minority racist régime in South Africa is the perpetuation of its illegal and oppressive policy of apartheid, which the international community has long declared illegal and a crime against humanity.

South Africa must therefore cease and desist from its cunning manoeuvres aimed at delaying the eradication of apartheid by instituting cosmetic changes in the name of so-called reform. Kenya calls on this body and peoples of goodwill everywhere to continue to exert pressure on the Pretoria régime to abandon apartheid. Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and detainees in South Africa must be released unconditionally and immediately so that they can participate fully in the democratic process of their country. South Africa should also immediately lift the state of emergency and its ban on liberation movements operating both inside and outside the country, and refrain from its acts of destabilization against its neighbours and other African countries in the subregion.

The large system of apartheid has made many South Africans suffer. A large number have left their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring States. South Africa continues its threats to destabilize neighbouring countries, causing mass movements of displaced persons within those States and outside and therefore further increasing the volume of refugees.

In order to alleviate the plight of the refugees and the burden imposed on the States hosting them, the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) agreed on the need for burden sharing in resettling the refugees. They did this in consonance with the international community, which resolved after the Second World War to contribute to the cost of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

However, in recognition of the deteriorating refugee situation in southern Africa, the OAU Council of Ministers, at its fortieth meeting, in 1987, called for a conference on the problem. One of the main aims of the Conference was to formulate ideas on how to assist front-line States. The co-operation received from the international community, and particularly the Government of Norway, which made the Conference possible, has been encouraging. The implementation of the agreed programme and plan of action will require the co-operation of all Member States. The international community is also urged to look into the plight of these refugees, because their needs, which are unique, have to be scrutinized, appraised and well understood in order to provide them with the appropriate forms of assistance.

The war between the two fraternal States of Iran and Iraq resulted in the loss of numerous lives and untold suffering for many families in both countries. Kenya hailed the two countries' agreement to a cease-fire with effect from 20 August 1988. While commending the leaders of the two nations for their courage and statesmanship in agreeing to halt the bloody conflict, our deepest gratitude goes to our Secretary-General, under whose auspices the two countries were able to come to the negotiating table in a bid to resolve their differences. Kenya is proud of its modest contribution, in connection with a United Nations observer team, to the quest for a lasting peace between the two countries, with which it enjoys cordial relations.

While we observe some signs of relaxation of tension in various parts of the world, in the Middle East the signs are in a different direction. The uprising of the Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories clearly demonstrates the frustration of those people, who have lived under military occupation for more than 20 years. Israel, in its mistaken belief, has resorted to excessive use of force to suppress demonstrations. The use of force cannot be the answer.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

Kenya has said time and again that no lasting peace in the area can be achieved until the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are recognized, including their right to self-determination and to a State of their own. We recognize the rights of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within internationally recognized boundaries. We therefore call upon Israel to withdraw from all the Arab land occupied since 1967, as this is the only path to the achievement of a durable and lasting peace.

In Central America, unlike other regions where the peace process is gathering momentum, we note with concern that very little progress has been realized despite the efforts of the Contadora and Support Groups. We therefore call upon all the States of the region to redouble their efforts in the search for peace in the light of the current favourable international political climate.

In the Korean peninsula, we are encouraged by the recent developments in favour of a dialogue between the two parties. We therefore call for continued constructive dialogue between the two Koreas towards a peaceful settlement of the problem.

The continuing arms race remains a major threat to the survival of mankind. More clearly than at any other stage in history, the entire international community is now in agreement regarding the serious danger posed on our planet by enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It was against this background that we had hoped that the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly - the third special session devoted to disarmament - held in June this year, would provide an opportunity to agree on a course of action that could give further momentum to the disarmament process. Unfortunately, the session ended without reaching agreement on a concluding document, in spite of the international climate provided by the signing of a Treaty between the two super-Powers.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

However, although no agreement was achieved by the special session, we must look ahead and use the little that was accomplished as a basis for future efforts. Good proposals were made at that session and should be examined for future adoption.

In the recent months we have observed some very encouraging signs of easing of tensions in most parts of the world. The ongoing negotiations on arms reduction between the two super-Powers have demonstrated that significant process in disarmament can be attained if there is genuine trust. In this regard, we welcome the recently concluded Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

The continent of Africa has undergone, in the course of its history, a series of unforgivable and humiliating experiences, such as slavery, balkanization, colonization, economic plundering and exploitation, to mention but a few in this sad catalogue. However, as if this were not enough punishment of Mother Africa, another scourge has been inflicted on Africa during the last few months. I am referring to the recent sordid revelations that toxic and radioactive wastes have been callously dumped in some African countries by certain companies from industrialized countries. This was and still is an outrageous criminal act.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

This "garbage imperialism" poses a serious and very harmful threat not only to mankind but also to the global environment. It is quite ironic that while billions of dollars are currently being spent on the cleaning of the environment all over the world, some immoral companies have the temerity to dump toxic wastes, knowing full well the end result of this despicable action. The international community should condemn this callous action and take decisive measures at the subregional and regional levels to enact laws to punish severely the perpetrators of this vicious action.

As the 1980s come to an end, the global economy continues to be in a sorry state, despite some growth rates in the industrialized countries and in South and East Asia. Large international payment imbalances persist and there is a risk of instability in stock markets, exchange rates and interest rates. This deteriorating situation is a direct consequence of continuing divergencies in the macro-economic policies of the industrialized countries. Unless there are significant changes in these policies, this may lead to a world-wide economic recession.

The economic conditions in the developing countries, particularly those with heavy debt problems and those in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to worsen, despite their stabilization, adjustment efforts and fiscal austerity measures. There are no prospects of improvement and the outlook for the future remains quite uncertain. These countries are likely to be plunged into a prolonged period of declining per capita income leading to severe poverty and socio-political unrest.

International economic relations continue to be characterized by inequalities in the share of global wealth between the developed and the developing countries. This has been made worse by the unilateral and inequitable economic policies of many of the industrialized countries.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

In the past it was taken for granted that once recovery in economic growth in the industrialized countries was on stream, it would be rapid enough to sustain development in developing countries, and that the transformation of financial and productive structures by the industrialized countries would not be disruptive to development efforts elsewhere, particularly in developing countries.

This approach does not seem to work at all. The slow-down in the world economy in the 1980s has demonstrated that the imbalances among industrial market economies constitute a serious threat to developing countries. The debt crisis, which was precipitated by the slow-down in world trade, deteriorating terms of trade in commodities, the decline in imports from developing countries, the unanticipated sharp and persistent increases in interest rates, and the unchecked swing to a net negative transfer of resources serve as a clear warning that in order for the global economy to recover and be on a sustainable growth trend, the benefits of interdependence must be mutual and self-reinforcing. The current vicious circle of poverty and waste in the third world - where over two thirds of the human population and abundant natural resources are to be found - must be broken in order to release the potential for generating global wealth for the benefit of all.

Despite the slow-down in growth, many developing countries are continuing their efforts to improve social conditions under drastic fiscal austerity. There are however limits to such efforts under the present unfair international trading system, the negative transfer of resources and the burden of debt. The cost in terms of environmental degradation, waste in human and natural resources, and declining incomes threatens human well-being and the very survival of life on our planet Earth. As the United Nations Children's Fund has observed with regard to the possible nature of a new international development strategy for the 1990s, the prospects for slow growth or stagnation in developing countries:

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

"... present a major challenge to the world community as it prepares for the 1990s. This is especially so if our objective for the year 2000 is to overcome the worst aspects of mass poverty: widespread malnutrition, hunger, ignorance and the deaths of nearly 40,000 small children daily If these trends continue, per capita income levels in the least developed countries in the year 2000 will still be well below that of 1980 and, for many African countries, even below that of 1970, 30 years earlier."

According to the World Bank, in contrast to other developing regions, sub-Saharan Africa has shown consistently weak economic performance over an entire generation. To make matters worse, during the 1980s per capita income has fallen to about three quarters of the level reached by the end of the 1970s. Africa's poor economic performance has now begun to erode the region's productive base. By the mid-1980s, gross investment levels in many countries were too low to maintain the capital stock. Consequently, health care and education, among other things, have deteriorated.

African Governments, individually and collectively, are committed and have undertaken comprehensive reform measures to improve the economic performance of their countries. However, the severe structural economic imbalances and the vulnerability of African economies to worsening external environment have had, and continue to have, a serious negative effect on those efforts.

It was in consideration of this reality that at the special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa held in 1986, African Governments submitted a Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which was adopted with the international community making a commitment to respond to Africa's efforts. At the conclusion of the recently concluded mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme, it was

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

acknowledged that, under severe austerity measures, the majority of African countries had undertaken reform and structural adjustment measures aimed at improving economic performance to bring about accelerated recovery and lay the foundations for sustained development. It was also recognized that the reform efforts of the African countries had not been matched by international measures to sustain them and that the African economic performance had deteriorated further.

Although the international community has taken some commendable initiatives in support of Africa's efforts with regard to debt relief and resource flows, the magnitude and nature of the African economic crisis calls for increased support and immediate vigorous translation of commitments into concrete action in order to produce the desired results. On their part, the African countries have renewed their commitment to these reforms and structural adjustments in order to improve their economic performance and the well-being of their people. Kenya appeals to all concerned, individually and collectively, to take all necessary initiatives and to make every effort to carry out the recommendations made in order to accelerate the full and timely implementation of the Programme.

(Mr. Muliro, Kenya)

Finally, Kenya would like to join other Member States in congratulating the United Nations peace-keeping forces on winning the Nobel Peace Prize this year in recognition of their services in the maintenance of peace and security. With the lowering of tensions between the super-Powers, the United Nations is entering a new phase that is ideal for revival of the multilateralism for which all of us have been yearning. We have come to realize and equally appreciate the indispensability of the United Nations in our world of today. In this regard, we must have a strong United Nations to which all Member States are committed. Kenya, a staunch believer in the United Nations, will not be found wanting in rendering its unflinching support to our Organization.

Mr. NDONG (Equatorial Guinea) (interpretation from Spanish): The forty-third session of the General Assembly is beginning its work at a time when the international community is anxiously stating and claiming, more than ever before, its right to secure and lasting peace and tranquillity. This session, therefore, must not dash these urgent hopes of the human community, which, for countless valid reasons, calls it the hope of mankind.*

Against the background of that yearning of mankind, the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, which I have the honour of heading at this time, congratulates the President of the Assembly on his well-deserved election to preside over our discussions. His country and the Republic of Equatorial Guinea have had close and excellent diplomatic relations for a long time. Moreover, the Argentine Republic is one of the countries that responded sincerely and positively, with grants and loans, to the call for help by His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, when he first took power, for help in rebuilding the

*Mr. Van Lierop (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

country, which had been ruined - indeed, devastated - by the previous régime. The people of Equatorial Guinea remember and will always remember this. For the moment, all I have been asked to do is express wholehearted thanks to the people of Argentina.

The Argentine Republic's support for the ideals of the United Nations is also acknowledged and appreciated by the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

The President's personal dedication, together with his negotiating experience and his recognized diplomatic gifts and talents, guarantees that the resolutions that will be adopted at the end of the debates will be impartial, beneficial and profitable for everyone. To that end, my delegation is fully at his disposal. We assure him that we shall do nothing to hinder his work to achieve the desired consensus.

On behalf of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea, I extend our congratulations to the other officers of the Assembly, whose hard work in co-ordinating our activities is not always fully recognized and appreciated.

With great nostalgia we express our gratitude to the outgoing President, Mr. Peter Florin, for the diplomatic and political wisdom with which he guided the delicate work of the forty-second session of the Assembly. His conduct gave us encouragement to continue the struggle against the injustice confronting the human community, and to do so in accordance with the words of our national emblem: unity, peace and justice.

The people and Government of Equatorial Guinea express to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, special gratitude for his great dedication and total devotion to the problems of the international community and his sincere aim of seeing concrete form given to the

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

lofty and noble ideals of the San Francisco Charter. In paying this tribute to him, we should like to think that the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces was to a large extent the result of his efforts. If that is not the case, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea proposes to the bodies responsible for these awards the individual candidacy of the Secretary-General for the next Nobel Peace Prize.

The report submitted by the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is a very significant and eloquent document, with regard both to the positive achievements it describes and to what it is hoped will be achieved - given, of course, the political will of the Governments involved in each case. In our opinion, there have been many successes. That is demonstrated by the very fact that the general debate of this forty-third session has reflected great optimism and a sincere recognition of the validity of multilateralism as well as the strengthening of the role and credibility of the United Nations. The United Nations has relit the torch of confidence which can guide us on the path to the solution of difficult, delicate and complex problems. Thus, it is the ideal forum and the impartial arbiter for dealing with questions of interest to the international community. And that was what the Organization's founding fathers had in mind. That is a source of pride to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. We reaffirm the confidence that we reposed in the United Nations when we became a Member. This confidence is not just a word; it is embodied in facts - facts that are applied within our country, where the recommendations of the United Nations are implemented in all sectors at the national level, and externally in all the international forums, where we pursue a strict policy of good-neighbourliness, co-operation, openness and dialogue with other States, in order to preserve the peace and tranquillity of our region, our continent and the world.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

In that respect, within our country governmental adjustments are made and new political, social and financial institutions are established, as the circumstances require, in order to comply with constitutional mandates. Examples are the political democratization programme and the economic reconstruction programme to achieve the desired comprehensive development on a firm basis.

I should like to summarize by referring briefly to the political process in my country.

On the basis of the law adopted by our Parliament in relation to political parties, the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea was recently established. Its first congress is being held now in the city of Bata. The democratization process has reached a stage where the participation of the people in the country's economic recovery and development can be more in keeping with their participation in the management of political affairs, thereby closing the gap which had continued to exist in our community's political and administrative organization.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

With the help of the United Nations Development Programme and other institutions of the United Nations system and bilateral donors, the Government of Equatorial Guinea has devised a global and sectoral strategy for the country's medium-term development and has convened a second round-table conference of donors in Geneva from 28 to 29 November. We ask the United Nations to make an appropriate assessment of the situation in Equatorial Guinea so that, in harmony with ongoing negotiations with international financial institutions, that conference might have truly successful results.

Similarly, externally, every day our country accedes to governmental, non-governmental, regional and subregional organizations, and international economic and financial institutions, and it has broad-ranging diplomatic relations with other States. For example, recently Equatorial Guinea has acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which were adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea has also recently acceded to the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, concluded in Vienna on 22 March 1985.

The Government of Equatorial Guinea has likewise taken due note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 1 of resolution 1988/54 of the Economic and Social Council, not only to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also conscientiously to reply to certain pernicious insinuations and references - to show that the Government of Equatorial Guinea has nothing to hide but, on the contrary, carries out its public activities in conformity with established rules and with the consent of the people.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

Our optimism and our confidence at this session are based on the report of the Secretary-General and also the course taken to solve the problems of Angola, whose negotiations with the Governments of Cuba and South Africa, with the positive mediation of the United States of America, have opened up a new era of hope.

Also, with regard to the sad case of Namibia, Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is beginning to have positive effects in the achieving of full sovereignty and independence for Namibia years after it was declared.

Then there is the open dialogue with Pretoria to do away with the system of apartheid and racial discrimination and to ensure recognition of the fundamental political rights of the black population, and on the question of the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and other compatriots, who should be returned to their loved ones.

There is also reason for optimism in the reopening of diplomatic relations between the sisterly and friendly countries of Morocco and Algeria.

We hail the achievements in the improvement of the climate of relations between Chad and Libya and the cessation of hostilities between them. Once again, we express hope concerning their resumption of diplomatic relations, which we trust can be achieved within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) so as to achieve a suitable peaceful settlement to their border dispute.

With regard to the referendum on self-determination proposed by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the OAU, accepted by His Majesty King Hassan II and shared by the POLISARIO Front, it must be carried out freely under international supervision and put an end to a conflict that is both painful and tragic. We welcome the new developments in this field.

Our delegation is pleased to see that a direct, sincere and peaceful dialogue is taking place between the two Cypriot communities, as suggested by the Secretary-General, in an attempt to settle the long-standing dispute and to guarantee the unity, sovereignty, and independence of the Republic of Cyprus.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

My Government is especially pleased at the news that the Governments of Iran and Iraq have agreed to accept compliance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as the basis for a just and lasting solution. We are sure that this will lead to peace and harmony between those two sisterly countries.

We are optimistic also with regard to the people of Afghanistan, given the accords signed in Geneva in April of this year, the positive effects of which are beginning to be felt with respect to self-determination and the independence of a people that has suffered for so long.

We cannot fail to mention Kampuchea, which after so much pain and suffering has an opportunity to speak of peace and stability and end its people's suffering. My Government supports the initiation of dialogue between all parties to the conflict, for we believe that to be the only way that might lead to the establishment of a broad-based Government and lead to national reconciliation, which implies the withdrawal of all foreign forces.

We wish warmly to congratulate the two Koreas on their expressed willingness to engage in a process of reunification. We also congratulate South Korea for the efforts it has made during the 40 years of its independence to activate this process of reunification free of foreign influence. The idea of Korea's being among us as a Member of the Organization merits reflection by us all.

Those are a few of the cases that have gained well-deserved approval from the international community and led to some serenity. But there are others that remain sources of concern, and we wish to state our hope that they too will be solved.

There is, for instance, the doleful case of the Middle East, concerning which we say again that there is urgent need for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and for the carrying out, with greater realism, of agreements that will result in the implementation of the Palestinian

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people's right to a sovereign State, which will guarantee the peace and security of the peoples of the region and their right, including the sovereign State of Israel, to live within safe and secure boundaries.

We are even more gravely concerned about the crisis in Lebanon, which erupted as long ago as in 1975. The deterioration of the situation there must be stemmed by means of a sincere and peaceful dialogue between the authorities of the two communities. We hope that thus Lebanon can achieve peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, independence and unity.

We are equally concerned about the situation in our sister countries of Latin America, where there are visible and chronic signs of outside interference that obstructs their self-determination and puts obstacles on their path to the stability and the development they desire. We regret the lack of compliance with the Esquipulas II peace accords signed in Guatemala by the Central American countries last year, which assumed the existence of the spirit of harmony necessary for the solving of the various problems among those nations.

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Regrettably, the situation concerning the Malvinas Islands is still one of stagnation. We therefore appeal to the Governments involved to begin genuine efforts to find a viable and internationally acceptable solution.

Although consideration of the question of East Timor has been postponed to the next session, we invite the Governments of Portugal and of Indonesia to continue their contacts and redouble their efforts to achieve an acceptable solution. We deeply appreciate and are interested in the intention of the administration of New Caledonia to lead that Territory to self-determination.

Some months ago the United Nations General Assembly held its third special session devoted to disarmament - a session which, to our great regret, concluded without formal agreement. Nevertheless, there was great optimism at the dialogue and bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. On that occasion, at this very rostrum, the head of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea said:

"The Republic of Equatorial Guinea, paradoxically, will not eliminate or diminish this monstrosity of weaponry simply because it neither possesses nor produces them nor does it consider attaining them. But we do hope to eliminate and lessen the widespread illness, hunger and poverty that are the scourges of my country. There are countries that are wasting millions of dollars every minute on weaponry while our country is talking about debts of thousands of dollars as a matter of survival." (A/S-15/PV.21, p. 7)

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea does not believe it necessary to go into great detail on the subject of armaments as the great threat to world peace, because, as we have seen, it is being dealt with by the giants who consider themselves the masters of the world. We prefer to speak about the economic imbalance between the nations of the world and, in particular, the countries of the

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third world, and the least developed countries, to whose number the Republic of Equatorial Guinea belongs. This, for us, is the real disarmament issue.

Little or no progress has been made on the question of the new international order since it was first mentioned here and in other international forums. Every day we see the gap widening between the intransigent and arrogant positions of the industrialized countries and the just claims of the developing countries. The thinking of the two sides differs so enormously that a solution satisfactory to both seems impossible. We do not believe that a serene and happy world can come about while a large part of mankind lives at subsistence level.

We also regret the fact that one of the cynical solutions invented and offered to the countries of the third world is the one of which the African continent has recently been a victim. I refer to the dumping of industrial, toxic, nuclear and radioactive waste, which is offered to African countries as the only way of achieving the degree of development of the industrialized countries. The fact that my country has not yet fallen victim to this Machiavellian machination is due to the great respect it has for the honour and dignity of a sovereign and proud country. The biased statements in this connection which are totally unfounded and are designed to distort the image of Equatorial Guinea, should be ignored by the international community, because they amount to pure imagination. Nor can the statements change our stand with respect to what is needed for the well-being of our people. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea knows what it really wants and knows how to achieve it. I take this opportunity to declare that my country has not received, and will not receive, any industrial, toxic, nuclear or radioactive waste.

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The delegation of Equatorial Guinea would like once again to state in this Assembly that His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo took charge of our country in 1979 when, because of its complete self-isolation from the outside world, it was about to disintegrate as a sovereign State. All the steps which have been taken since then have been arduous and slow, but they have been safe and good steps. The Government is observing fully the rules of the Constitution, which was adopted in 1982 under the supervision of the United Nations. The programme of democratization and comprehensive development that we began is irreversible. In this connection, we would like to invite anyone wishing to visit our country to do so, provided that he is willing to assess the considerable changes without preconceptions and in an impartial manner.

Having said that, I should point out that we are convinced that the basic principles of international coexistence and the attributes of national sovereignty may be greatly harmed by continuing interference in the internal affairs of States. Thus we express once again our rejection of any interference in the internal affairs of Equatorial Guinea. This is a firm and indisputable principle of all States and also of the United Nations.

At the beginning of this statement I said that the forty-third session of the General Assembly was the hope of mankind and that we should not frustrate or disappoint it. Equatorial Guinea hopes that at this session the General Assembly will adopt resolutions that will help to bring about world peace and security and that it will give priority in its resolutions to the situation of the poorest States. It urges other nations to abandon their selfish nationalism and calls upon them to view the problems of mankind from a point of view that will allow us to preserve the individual, who deserves better conditions, conditions enabling him to achieve the ultimate goal for which he was created.

Mr. PETERS (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): On behalf of the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I have great pleasure in offering sincere congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. We are very confident that in the discharge of his duties, his illustrious career and his fine statesmanship will contribute significantly to the progress and success of the work of this session.

Permit me to express my appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, for the manner in which he performed the task entrusted to him during the forty-second session. During his presidency he demonstrated great faith in the Organization and contributed significantly to the successful conclusions of that session and of the several resumed sessions.

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Once again, I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his untiring efforts and his stalwart performance during the recent turbulent years of our Organization's history. His devoted efforts to the pursuit of peace and security and his firm defence of the principles of the Charter are characteristics of his commitment to the preservation of the goals and ideals of the United Nations.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is tangible recognition of the effectiveness of the United Nations system. My delegation wishes to pay a tribute to all those at present serving and those who have served for their achievement and their contribution to the United Nations peace-keeping operations and, by extension, to world peace and security.

This session takes place against the background of improved relations between the super-Powers and some decrease in the level of global tension. The recently concluded Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the cease-fire in the Gulf war, and the progress towards the peaceful solution of conflicts in Western Sahara, Kampuchea, Namibia and Cyprus have all attested to this fact. A great deal of the credit for these achievements undoubtedly belongs to this Organization. In spite of the retreat from multilateralism on the part of some, the Organization has not wavered in its commitment to seek solutions within the global framework. The Secretary-General must be complimented on his indomitable will and the sincerity of purpose displayed in the execution of his mandate.

In his address at the commemorative session of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Right Honourable James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister of

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reminded this body that the purpose and principles of this Organization remained as valid then as they were in 1945. The Charter, he said, had withstood the test of time, and, whatever the shortcomings in its implementation or the limitations of the United Nations institutions, they did not derive from the Charter. He called for a rededication to the principles so ably set forth by the founding fathers of the Organization. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to this position.

It is my firm belief that we are at the threshold of a new era, an era in which the differences that have divided us for so long are less significant than the difficulties we have to face together. Man's greatest hope today is to live in a secure world with a protected common environment. The INF Treaty between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev is a historic achievement in the process of disarmament. That is why Saint Vincent applauds this agreement.

Disarmament and arms control are matters of global concern. Our Prime Minister, in his address to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, supported the view that savings from disarmament should be channelled into development, and proposed that funds thus saved should, as a matter of priority, be devoted to reforestation in Africa. While we welcome what has been achieved so far, we realize that international peace and security is the common concern of all mankind, so that the United Nations has an indispensable role to play in this regard. We cannot rest on our laurels; the hope for a nuclear-free world is our ultimate goal.

In other areas of conflict progress is desperately needed. Independence for Namibia comes readily to mind. In this direction, we have always supported Security Council resolution 435 (1978). We remain cautiously hopeful, however, for a positive outcome of the talks between the Governments concerned to bring an end

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to the illegal occupation of Namibia. It is our fervent hope that, come 1989, this time around, Namibia will be a fully-fledged Member of this Organization.

On the question of South Africa can anything more be said, except of course, to reiterate that the diabolic system of apartheid continues to be paramount among the human rights concerns of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The movement in favour of human dignity is now irreversible. There can be no doubt that fundamental change will come to South Africa. The only questions are, when and how and at what cost in human life.

The problems of the Middle East have preoccupied this Assembly since the creation of the United Nations. Peaceful solutions have proved elusive and in their absence violence and extremism have increased. But that is an argument for redoubled effort, not for despair. There is today growing support for a properly structured international conference based on Israel's right to exist and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

As we reflect on the problems which beset the troubled regions of the globe, and our own region, Latin America and the Caribbean come readily to mind. We continue to support the efforts of the Contadora Group. We also believe that there is much merit in the Esquipulas agreement and all other regional efforts aimed at bringing peace to that afflicted region. We believe that socio-economic deprivation is the root cause of the conflict, and any effort aimed at finding a solution must take cognizance of this factor.

We are heartened by the welcome news coming out of Seoul to the effect that the Government of South Korea is willing to end the situation of confrontation between it and its brother to the north so that the way can be paved for the establishment of relations between the two countries based on a spirit of

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co-operation. We hope that this welcome gesture can be built upon so that the process of accession by both countries to membership of the United Nations can be expedited.

My delegation applauds the Government and people of the Republic of Korea on the successful completion of the Seoul Olympics, which were conducted in an atmosphere of friendly rivalry and peace. We trust that the co-operative spirit generated throughout the games will contribute to the relaxation of tension in that region.

The view is held in some quarters that the economic recovery in the powerful economic centres of the world could provide the stimulus for renewed economic growth in the rest of the world. But the evidence to the contrary is there for all to see. The accompanying view that the remedies for the economic ills of the South lie in individual national efforts cannot be substantiated. Third-world development efforts have nothing to do with the unfavourable terms of trade, the capricious nature of the markets for the primary products of the South, the high interest rates levied by banks and the fluctuations in the parity between the major currencies. All of these are variables which have an adverse impact on our fragile economies and over which we have absolutely no control. Add to this our vulnerability to natural disasters and one gets a true picture of economies in danger.

While we are thankful to those that assist in alleviating the difficulties faced by these economies we are mindful that the assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product is not met by all those that are eligible.

My Government realized quite early that Vincentians had to make painful sacrifices, and embarked on a programme of structural adjustment aimed at avoiding cost over-run on its recurrent budget so that there could be funds available from

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local revenue to be utilized in the capital budget sector. This had to be done because the Vincentians are proud people who do not wish to rely solely on the generosity of others.

It is a fact of life that the problems faced by poor and developing countries are the more harsh and intractable the smaller the country. These problems have been frequently reiterated and must by now be familiar to everyone. Allow me to repeat by way of reminder, however, that they are a mixture of the problems emanating from smallness in general and island characteristics in particular. These characteristics can be identified as non-viable internal markets, diseconomies of scale, a narrow range of resources, and lack of opportunity to take advantage of external economies by way of linkage with the service networks of neighbouring States and thereby reduce the relative costs of infrastructure. There is the further disadvantage that many of these States, like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, are archipelagic - a phenomenon which poses enormous problems, accompanied by their consequential economic and social costs.

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In view of their small overall size and the relatively small size of their commercial debt, these States do not constitute a priority group for private commercial banks. The simultaneous ineligibility for commercial and concessionary financial flows poses the real possibility of these countries' losing whatever advances they have made towards improving their standard of living and raising their economies from the category of the poorest. In order to save them from the economic retrogression to which they may be doomed, it is important that adequate resources be made available to them on appropriate terms.

We are living through an era of rapid change. Generally speaking, the peoples of the industrialized countries have experienced a rapid improvement in their living conditions. For the developing countries that is not so. While the 1980s may be a remarkable decade, marked by real progress in respect of international peace and security, the decade can be considered as one of lost opportunities for the third world. Very little has been done to prevent the gap between the rich and the poor countries from widening. As we approach the twenty-first century we are faced with the major challenge of overcoming the global development crisis. We must fight the battle against poverty together.

Poverty undermines security, compromises equality and denies hope and opportunity. Alleviating poverty must be given a new priority on national and international agendas. We must work to achieve social justice for the poorest of our world and initiate economic growth where there has been stagnation, revitalization where there has been despair, hope where there has been hopelessness. There must be a spirit of sharing, of giving where there have been surpluses.

The future will depend on how successful we are in harnessing our common attitudes with our limited resources to combat the common challenges. Stability,

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prosperity and social and economic justice are coming to different parts of the world at different speeds. We must implement corrective measures so as not to create an irreversible imbalance. The challenge is economic and political as well as ethical. We can safeguard the future only by working together. We cannot safeguard it at each other's expense.

The critical economic situation for the developing world is characterized by unsustainable external debt. It is obvious that the heavily indebted low-income countries will never be able to repay their debts. We must fully recognize the nature of the problem and create the solutions to deal with it. The lending policies of our institutions should not be cast in stone so that they run the risk of bringing about political destabilization which might ultimately lead to increased human suffering and degradation.

The dangers which are likely to be caused through short-sightedness or deliberate environmental practices are many and varied. The issues of toxic wastes, deforestation, desertification, acid rain, the widening gap in the ozone layer, the climatic changes and the greenhouse effect are some of the environmental hazards which must be addressed by the international community before irreversible damage is done to the environment. These issues must be placed on the priority list of the United Nations and swift and workable solutions must be found if mankind is to survive. They must not be relegated to the back burner, as time is not on our side. The world must be preserved for succeeding generations.

As an archipelagic State and a link in the Caribbean chain, with its unprotected borders on the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines must be conscious of its vulnerability as a potential transshipment point for drug traffickers. We are also conscious of the ever-increasing use of illicit drugs the world over, especially among the young. My Government, in

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co-operation with our neighbours, our friends and the international community, will never relent in its efforts to eradicate the illicit trafficking in narcotics and to end the tragedy of drug abuse.

The next decade will be crucial. The United Nations role will be to harness the irreversible forces of change to ensure a more peaceful, more prosperous and more humane world. Vital and difficult decisions will have to be taken. We have the capacity to destroy life on this planet, but we also have the capacity to make this world a better place for all future generations. We look in the future for a more humane world in which the rich nations will be more generous; where the strong nations are just, the weak nations are regarded as equals, the poor nations are treated as crown jewels and human dignity is enshrined in the image of our Divine Creator, because together we must preserve this earth for all our children's children.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of France, who wishes 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 five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. FERRIERE (France) (interpretation from French): This morning the representative of Fiji saw fit to question France about the underground nuclear tests that we are carrying out on our territory in Polynesia. He even affirmed that those tests were "defiling our part of the world" (A/43/PV.28, p. 61) - that area of the Pacific.

(Mr. Ferriere, France)

We would like to remind the Assembly once again that that statement is based on no scientific evidence and that it is contrary to the facts. Underground nuclear tests by France do not harm either the interests of the States of the region or the health of the people living there, nor do they harm the environment, as studies carried out by several national and international commissions have amply demonstrated.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.