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AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate

1. The PRESIDENT: This morning we shall begin the general debate. Before I call on the first speaker, I should like to request members to bear in mind the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its 5th plenary meeting on 23 September 1977 regarding the procedure concerning the general debate, particularly in connexion with the list of speakers, the expression of congratulations after a speech has been delivered, and the exercise of the right of reply.
2. To facilitate the planning of work, the Assembly also decided to close the list of speakers in the general debate on Wednesday, 28 September, at 6 p.m. Representatives wishing to participate in the general debate should therefore leave their names with the Secretariat before 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 28 September.
3. Mr. AZEREDO DA SILVEIRA (Brazil):¹ Mr. President, permit me to express to you the satisfaction of the Brazilian delegation at seeing you presiding over this session of the General Assembly. I bring you our congratulations on your unanimous election to this high office.
4. I also wish to express the appreciation of my delegation for the manner in which Ambassador Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe conducted the work of the thirty-first session.
5. Brazil supports the principle of the universality of the Organization, to the fulfilment of which we draw nearer each passing year. It is, therefore, always a pleasure to mark the admission of new Member States to the United Nations as we now do in the case of Viet Nam and Djibouti. We hope that other peoples that still seek their independence will shortly join us in the common endeavour to promote international peace and security.
6. The United Nations mirrors a concept of international relations based on mutual respect and co-operation among

States. Although in some Articles of the Charter allowances were made for the realities of power, it is undeniable that the principle of equality among States is one of the fundamental pillars of the Charter. The co-operation which is sought is horizontal co-operation among sovereign States, in which there is no room for hegemony or subordination. The Charter of the United Nations as the supreme instrument of contemporary international law urges each of the States here represented to co-operate and to harmonize our interests in accordance with the parameters defined in its principles and purposes. Such co-operation naturally presupposes the seeking of a point of convergence which would be of benefit to all countries. To Brazil co-operation is a spontaneous gesture flowing from the ecumenical nature of its people. As Brazil understands and practises it, co-operation presupposes respect for national identities and for the sovereign right of States to seek the most adequate ways to reach the goals of welfare and progress of their peoples. It presupposes, therefore, respect for the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States which, more than a general principle of the United Nations, is a legal obligation assumed by all States upon signing and ratifying the Charter.

7. The factors which contribute most to the frustration of the first of the purposes of the Organization, namely that of guarding peace and avoiding the use of force in the settlement of international disputes, still exist. The reason is that among the areas of action of the United Nations, that of disarmament is perhaps the one in which the positive results have been fewest and on which the strengthening of international peace and security is most dependent.

8. In spite of that, Brazil continues to regard disarmament as one of the central endeavours of our time. New and redoubled international efforts in that direction must be made, for the meagre results hitherto obtained fall far short of the needs of the international community. The first of those needs, it cannot be repeated too often, is the very survival of human beings; and it is in the light of this, the greatest of all needs, that all others should be seen, such as the establishment of true conditions of international peace and security in order to benefit all peoples without distinction and to offer them tranquillity and the advantages of economic and technological progress.

9. The States which have the greatest potential ability to jeopardize our life on earth also have a correlated specific responsibility for facilitating the progressive attainment of understanding among all nations, with a view to the setting up of a more stable and equitable international political and economic order. The international acceptance of these values is not a simple matter of convenience but, in the world of today, a condition for survival.

¹ Mr. Azeredo da Silveira spoke in Portuguese. The English version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

10. The inefficacy of multilateral efforts on disarmament and the paucity of results achieved up to now can only be a cause for disquiet. The ban on nuclear tests in three environments, besides being incomplete, has contributed little or nothing to the aims of disarmament or even to arms control. There is little confidence that international undertakings now in force will be sufficient to guarantee the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful ends. In relation to the seas and oceans, the only progress achieved relates to the ban on placing nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed, on the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof. The Convention on bacteriological weapons² was made possible only because the countries which do not possess such weapons in their armouries have made great concessions, including the relinquishment of a mechanism for verification and safeguards and the acceptance of a separate negotiation of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

11. The arms race goes on. Strategic weapons are still being perfected and multiplied. The introduction of new generations of tactical nuclear armaments seems to be accompanied by the generalization of a tolerant attitude towards their possible use. By this course—and apart from the fact that the new weapons have an enormous potential for destruction—almost insensibly a new option is open for a possible nuclear escalation. Especially cruel weapons continue to be invented. These developments, as well as the dangerous experiments being made in genetic engineering, jeopardize the rights of all peoples and the integrity of the human person, both now and in the future.

12. We must not forget that it is in this context—in which negotiations among States coexist with the still inexorable pursuit of the arms race—that are rightly placed the efforts being made towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, although these are not the only element in the problem. It does not seem to me necessary to repeat at this moment the criticism of the gaps and grave imperfections of those efforts, as mirrored in the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [see resolution 2373 (XXII)]. This criticism was put forward by the signers of that Treaty themselves, during the Review Conference which took place in 1975.³

13. In this regard, the Brazilian Government has recently had, in an official document with wide international distribution, the opportunity to state its position on the ensemble of questions related to the use of nuclear energy. The essence of our thinking bears repetition here.

14. Brazil is a peaceful country. The dominant concern of the Brazilian nation is its integrated, harmonious economic and social development. Brazil is opposed to all proliferation of nuclear weapons, whether vertical or horizontal, and is ready to participate in international efforts aimed at reducing and in due course eliminating nuclear arms, as well as preventing their proliferation. We believe that the true

meaning of non-proliferation is to ban the diffusion of nuclear weapons, not the dissemination of nuclear technology. Given adequate safeguards, access to the technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not be subjected to discriminatory restrictions.

15. The Brazilian decision to implement an important nuclear programme for peaceful purposes was based on a careful evaluation of the energy needs of the country and the possible options for meeting such needs. Brazil is convinced that international co-operation, supported by appropriate safeguards, is the best means of ensuring the objectives of the development of the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without the risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The same directive, incidentally, was elaborated in the United Nations itself, for IAEA, whose long experience accumulated over the last two decades has proved so useful, was conceived and created precisely in order to attempt to accelerate and increase the contribution of nuclear energy to the peace, health and prosperity of the whole world, ensuring that such co-operation is not used in a way that would contribute to military ends.

16. We trust that the next special session of the General Assembly dedicated to disarmament will be a positive step in the multilateral negotiations concerning the problems in this field. Having in mind the preparatory work under way, we are especially confident that it will be possible to concentrate the attention of the General Assembly on the most critical of the areas of disarmament, namely, the negotiations for effective measures of nuclear disarmament.

17. Our community is annually called upon to pronounce itself on the Middle East, an area where advances and retreats occur on the road to peace. The Brazilian position has been reiterated in this plenary Assembly and in other bodies. True to the guiding principles of our nationality, we consider as indispensable elements for a just and lasting solution respect for the right of all States to their existence and for the right of all peoples and countries of this region to enjoy self-determination, to exercise their sovereignty and to live in peace. True, furthermore, to the principle of the non-acquisition of territory by force, we share the widely manifested concern with regard to the recent initiatives that run counter to United Nations resolutions and that pretend to give a kind of *de facto* legitimacy to situations created by force. These initiatives make more difficult the establishment of peace in the region.

18. As a result of racial oppression and the persistence of colonialism, southern Africa is another region where serious tensions are widespread and put at risk the very maintenance of international peace and security. Brazil has repeatedly made plain its repudiation of racism and colonialism, together with its growing apprehension at this situation which is a challenge to the conscience of humanity. It was thus with special interest that we participated in the major meetings that took place this year in Maputo and in Lagos, namely, the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia⁴ and the World Conference for Action against Apartheid.⁵

² Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (see resolution 2826 (XXVI)).

³ Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held at Geneva from 5 to 30 May 1975.

⁴ Held in Maputo from 16 to 21 May 1977.

⁵ Held in Lagos from 22 to 26 August 1977.

19. The questions of interest to the peoples of southern Africa must be solved without further ado. The international community has the undeniable moral and political duty to create conditions to accelerate the solution of these international questions. In spite of the numerous obstacles raised by those who still benefit in the region from the present situation, the path to negotiation must be trod with perseverance. The options provided by the Charter of the United Nations should be utilized, among others, so as to make it perfectly clear that the international community is determined to see that the negotiations are conducted with speed.

20. Discrimination, segregation and racial hatred constitute one of the most extreme violations of the rights of the human person. The practices of *apartheid* deserve condemnation both at the ethical and juridical levels and at the political level, for, in addition to offending the moral conscience and transgressing human rights, they represent a factor that disturbs peace.

21. I should like also to mention, although very briefly, the geographical region to which we belong and with the aspirations of which Brazil fully identifies. It is with pleasure that I refer to the constructive relationship among the countries of Latin America developed on the basis of open friendship and positive co-operation aimed at mutual benefit.

22. Non-intervention in the internal and external affairs of other States and attachment to peaceful and effective means for the solution of occasional disputes, which stem very often from the very closeness of their relationship, constitute the incalculable heritage of the countries of that region.

23. Within the inter-American framework it is with satisfaction that I record a significant event, both for the countries in the hemisphere and for the international community, namely, the signing on 7 September of the treaties on the Panama Canal. This is an historic episode in which the search for convergence and an effort at co-operation prevailed. Panama and the United States of America have demonstrated a sense of opportunity and of realism in finding a mutually satisfactory solution of a question of long and painful duration. The treaties are an important step towards the re-establishment of justice and of the respect that all countries deserve, be they great or small, powerful or not powerful.

24. As I have pointed out, co-operation—which is urged upon us by the Charter of the United Nations—presupposes as a basic requirement respect for national identity and for the sovereignty of States. The Charter places the theme of human rights precisely within the field of international co-operation, and within that field makes the promotion of those rights one of the most important tasks of the Organization. The treatment of this question at the multilateral level might assist the creation of favourable conditions for the full exercise of those rights which, in our view, embrace not only civil and political aspects but also social and economic questions such as the right to food, to education, to culture, to work, to a life free from pauperism and to support in old age. All these matters must be dealt with within a broad and integrated perspective.

25. International concern over human rights is not new, and there is no novelty in the efforts of many States to see those rights respected. It would be useful to recall, even though briefly, the common conceptual heritage accumulated over the years in the consideration of this subject at the international level.

26. The first component of this heritage is the conviction that the problem is one of a fundamentally ethical nature, a basic fact that does not always seem to be present when the matter is being examined in this body or elsewhere. Very often the subject is dealt with with intentions that differ from the sincere desire to protect the rights of man.

27. A second component of our common heritage lies in the conviction that the question of human rights is of a universal character. To justify discriminatory treatment on the basis of national interest is to destroy the very foundations of the defence of those rights.

28. Thirdly, it would be unrealistic to imagine that these questions are, in practice, isolated from consideration of other problems which afflict the community of nations. The creation of conditions favourable to the generalized respect for human rights will depend on the substantial improvement of political and economic security at the international level. As long as the nuclear arms race continues unchecked and as long as no satisfaction is given within the framework of North-South relations to the just aspirations of the developing countries, the basic prerequisites will be missing to permit human rights, in their wider and truer meaning, being effectively respected on a global scale. The refusal to facilitate the establishment of a more just and more stable international economic order, one that would meet the claims of collective economic security for development, is a factor that cannot be ignored or overshadowed in the interest of respect for human rights.

29. Finally, the solution of the problems of the rights of man lies within the responsibility of the Government of each country. In a world which is still, unfortunately, marked by interventionist attitudes, be they open or veiled, and by the distortion of certain matters, no country or group of countries should enjoy the status of judge of other countries on such serious and intimate questions of national life.

30. Bearing in mind this conceptual heritage, Brazil has recently associated itself with the work of the Commission on Human Rights, an association which will allow it to contribute more effectively, at the normative international level, in the promotion of these rights. The machinery and procedures already available to the United Nations for the consideration of human rights problems seem to us ample and sufficient to enable the work to proceed at the rhythm required by the complexity of the subject and preserved from passing factors and circumstances.

31. International co-operation cannot and must not be an instrument to be resorted to for momentary convenience nor must it serve as the last resort for help in circumstances of acute crisis. It must be a continuous, constructive and creative effort. An objective evaluation of the field of international economic relations demonstrates that such an effort is truly indispensable.

32. Initiatives and projects succeed one another without, as we should wish, any change occurring in the harsh realities facing the developing countries. Almost 20 years after the launching of the First United Nations Development Decade, almost 15 years after the convening of the first session of UNCTAD, and more than a generation after the creation of the Economic and Social Council where the central problems of world economic relations have been discussed, the developing countries still face severe obstacles and encounter structures and machinery which no longer respond to the claims of the present world.

33. Brazil was among the first to understand the threat to international security necessarily constituted by economic inequality. We were able to see in the international structures as they were then, and still are today, a grave restriction on the development process. In 1974, the Brazilian proposal on collective economic security for development proceeded from that finding to demonstrate that social justice and economic progress are essential to the system of guarantees among States and thus inseparable from the goal of peace and security.⁶

34. The results arrived at after 18 months of work by the Conference on International Economic Co-operation cannot be described as encouraging. It had been expected that that Conference, even though it might have found it impossible to solve immediate problems, could have been the source of a new spirit which would prevail in the examination of sensitive and controversial questions when they were the subject of negotiations in specific forums. That did not come about, as demonstrated by the fruitless nature of the Paris negotiations. I do not wish now to begin the examination of the substance of the talks at the Conference, but I should like to recall that unfulfilled hopes and non-binding manifestations of goodwill are not substitutes for effective action.

35. If the weight of congealed structures and the immense obstacles raised by history in the face of those countries which arrived later to the process of industrialization is not enough, I must point out with special concern another aspect of the present picture of international economic relations: the re-emergence of protectionism in some developed countries. To overcome these additional difficulties, international co-operation is ever more necessary for the benefit of both the developing countries and the industrialized countries. Brazil expects developed countries to discourage discriminatory attitudes and to pledge themselves to give equitable treatment to exports from developing countries.

36. The recognition of the fact that difficulties do exist and the small margin of progress achieved do not dishearten us in our search for new ways. The developing countries must, above all, make use of their own efforts, of the growing weight of their economies and of their solidarity, which was tested under severe conditions, to continue pragmatically to act with strength, even within the present rules of the game, to overcome the difficulties and obstacles facing them.

37. But this, however, should not let us lose sight of the imperative need to continue to work, both at the opera-

tional and normative levels, to obtain structural changes in the intrinsically unjust nature of those rules.

38. It is, therefore, with a confidence tempered by realism that we identify the usefulness of two important coming conferences to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations: that on technical co-operation among developing countries and that on science and technology for development. I believe that few areas hold so much promise of beneficial results for the international community.

39. We have seen within the United Nations the expansion of the capacity of countries to express their national aspirations and to influence decision-making processes the consequences of which affect everyone. We want to see this reality consolidated and strengthened. We want to see the complete abolition of the gap which still keeps many States at a distance from international consideration of questions affecting their interests. This is an urgent matter, for the accelerated technological development of some States may result in a new factor which will facilitate the survival of obsolete forms of international relations.

40. To allow the United Nations fully to discharge its great duties, it will be necessary to encourage the equitable participation of all States in the political process, thus reinvigorating the international system and giving new momentum to common efforts towards peace, security and development. Brazil has confidence in the world of tomorrow.

41. Mr. JAMIESON (Canada): Mr. President, I am pleased to be one of the first speakers to congratulate you on your election, which my delegation regards as a tribute both to your personal qualities and to the important role your country has played in the United Nations. In agreeing to preside not only over our annual deliberations this autumn, but also over next year's important special session on disarmament, you have accepted a heavy responsibility. I know you will fulfil it with distinction.

42. This year we welcome two new Members to the Assembly, the Republic of Djibouti and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. As a member of the Security Council, Canada was pleased to recommend both countries for membership, and we look forward to working with them in this Organization.

43. Like others who will participate in this debate, I have received much advice on what I should say that might be helpful in solving the many problems we face. It has been a frustrating experience.

44. I have concluded regrettably that I could read my last year's speech again, word for word, and no one would notice the repetition, nor would they care! The sad truth is that every serious issue I and many others raised last year remain unresolved and some now pose a greater threat to peace and security than they did 12 months ago. It has not been a good year for the United Nations.

45. Small wonder that our deliberations have so little relevance for our publics back home or for the many millions around the world whom we are committed to help

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifty-seventh Session, 1901st meeting, paras. 18-26.*

but who have become disillusioned and cynical about our ability to find answers to what are in many cases, matters of life and death.

46. I make these judgements with regret. No country has been more consistent than Canada in supporting the principles of the United Nations. We do not have to apologize for our record here or for the attitude of the Canadian people in accepting responsibilities for peace-keeping, for leadership in the North-South dialogue and for making a fair contribution to all United Nations initiatives. Canada and Canadians have earned the right to be heard and what Canadians are saying is that the performance of the United Nations is not good enough.

47. Canada does not, of course, exclude itself from all blame for this inadequate record. Like other countries, there are times when we get our priorities mixed and lack the proper sense of urgency in dealing with new or continuing threats to world order and security. Nor am I interested merely in pointing the finger at others for the dubious pleasure of giving vent to my own frustrations. I speak as I do because I know that many of you share my views. It is not our sense of commitment that is flagging; no one in his right mind would wilfully project the world towards more bloodshed and potential global conflict. All of us want peace and order in international affairs.

48. Yet we are trapped in the tangled thickets of history, of fear, suspicion, and ancient deep-seated antagonisms. Self-interest usually prevails over our efforts to define and foster larger, more generous objectives. I am aware of the conviction of many in this Organization and elsewhere that this is the reality of international affairs—"the real world" as they call it—that glaring imperfections are a normal and unavoidable part of the human condition and that we must resign ourselves to the mere containment of the most virulent and dangerous manifestations of human greed and irrationality, accepting that the world's fate is to stumble on from one crisis to the next. There are grounds for healthy scepticism, I agree; but in the United Nations that scepticism gives way too often to resignation and to a form of professional cynicism that views all new approaches as yet another example of short-lived idealistic naivete.

49. Let me assure you that I am not naive; but I cannot accept, Canada cannot accept, that this Organization and its Member States are powerless to remove the root-causes of those major tensions that now require all of us to live out our lives in the constant shadow of impending disaster.

50. There is among us another widely held view that, while any country can light a fire, only the super-Powers have the option of either fuelling its flames or putting it out. There is, of course, a key role for the large, wealthy and powerful nations and their actions should not be greeted by automatic mistrust. But for smaller countries to do nothing or adhere blindly and unquestioningly to this or that power bloc is to avoid responsibility and to make a mockery of the United Nations and the opportunity it provides for reasoned, free and open debate.

51. However awesome the outcome of super-Power decision-making and action can be, we must never forget that many of today's flash-points are not of their making. Many

smaller countries have shown that they are perfectly capable entirely on their own of causing problems for all of us. And such actions are all the more reprehensible when they risk or even invite the escalation of East-West tensions.

52. If we are to make progress here, there must be an end to the sterile debates of recent years where the outcome is always a foregone conclusion. If the vitality of open debate is not restored to the United Nations then increasingly the important decisions affecting the fate of mankind will be made elsewhere and this Organization and most of its agencies will wither into insignificance and, eventually, un lamented oblivion.

53. Lest any consider this too harsh a judgement and too pessimistic a forecast, I ask you to recall objectively the reaction of many of our own publics to United Nations deliberations and resolutions. My own experience at home and around the world has been bad.

54. Granted these criticisms are often based on prejudice or ignorance. But we know too that much can and should be done to make the United Nations more effective. I propose to give certain examples as well as suggestions for improvement.

55. Two of the main issues that will come before us at this session are the Middle East and southern African situations. Last year we adopted 20 resolutions on the Middle East and no less than 34 on questions related to southern Africa. To what purpose was all that time and effort, not to mention money, expended? The answer is surely "very little" because many of those resolutions simply expressed moral judgements and were devoid of practical proposals for action. Furthermore, everyone knew that they had little if any prospect of being implemented. Yet the vast and increasingly expensive machinery of the United Nations ground on not only through the 50-odd resolutions I have mentioned but through nearly 200 more, many in the same category and thus predestined to suffer the same fate. Already gathering dust, I suspect, is the 400-page compendium of those resolutions, most echoing word for word the deliberations of previous years.

56. No one should be surprised therefore at the indifference with which the media and the public greet their publication. By adopting more resolutions we have succeeded paradoxically in ensuring that they receive less, not more, attention. Changing our collective habits will not be easy. By passing more resolutions we are certainly letting our situation deteriorate. We should scrutinize the agenda closely to resist the automatic reinclusion of old items and the addition of less essential new ones. We should group items so that similar debates will not take place in different committees on closely related subjects. We should avoid the proliferation of resolutions which express the Members' aspirations or objectives but do not contribute in a practical way to achieving any of them. A few short, precise and practical resolutions will have more impact than the many rambling and ineffective ones we now consider each year.

57. As a member once each decade of the Security Council, Canada has accumulated some experience but also has a chance to take a fresh look at its activities every time we return. So far this year, the Council has debated several

significant issues in a sensible, restrained fashion. None of us would claim, however, that it has done much to enhance its position as the United Nations organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Our Secretary-General has wisely warned us of the risk that there may come, in his words, “a time when the Council is desperately needed and will be found to be too weak to fulfil its responsibilities” [A/32/1, *sect. II*].

58. The problems arise, not because of weaknesses in the Council's structure or powers but, rather, from a lack of impetus. To give a greater sense of purpose to the Council, the Charter provides for periodic meetings at which members could be represented by a Cabinet member or other specially designated representative. Remarkably, Mr. President, as you well know, the Council held the first of such meetings in its history at the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations. This Assembly welcomed the Council's intention to hold further periodic meetings, but none has taken place.

59. I propose that the Security Council should begin meeting regularly at ministerial level. Fifteen ministers meeting together could give a new sense of life and political purpose to the Council. Instead of following a formal agenda, they could have a free discussion of major issues of international peace and security, based on, perhaps, a special report by the Secretary-General. The meetings should be held in an informal atmosphere, without a small army of advisers, thus allowing the ministers to exchange views informally. Meetings at ministerial level should be held once or twice a year rather than once every 25 years. The first meeting might well be devoted to finding ways to make the work of the Council more relevant to the major issues of peace and security.

60. When I spoke here last year,⁷ I suggested that the Economic and Social Council should be given a more significant role. At its spring and summer sessions, the Council considers a bewildering variety of issues. It has even less success in what should be its central task—setting priorities and co-ordinating the work of this family of organizations in the economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields. My delegation believes that the Council should have more frequent and shorter sessions. At each of these it could deal thoroughly with one group of subjects, covering all of its agenda over a two-year period. From time to time the Council should also meet at ministerial level to review major economic or social questions when policy considerations justify participation at this level. In all United Nations organs, I welcome new practices of informal consultation and negotiations through contact groups which help to turn the United Nations from a deliberative body into a real negotiating forum.

61. We must also work for an improvement in the work of the specialized agencies. Many of them have a distinguished record. But our method for controlling the system as a whole has been unsatisfactory. We have been good at devising new programmes, but less so at identifying ones which are obsolete or at preventing duplication. One result has been an escalation of costs. A few years ago one of my

predecessors complained to the Assembly that the assessed budgets of the United Nations family of organizations had doubled in 10 years. Now they have more than doubled in five. We shall have to ensure that budgets are kept down, and that money is spent only on subjects that have the highest priority.

62. A second problem with the specialized agencies has been the extent to which they have been turned from their main purposes to deal with the political issues which are the responsibility of this Assembly. Canada is determined to resist this process. We have been particularly concerned about the ILO. We value that organization for its record of achievement on human rights and its unique contribution to the United Nations system as a whole. We are anxious to preserve the impartiality and authority of its procedures so that a member State will not be condemned without impartial investigation. I believe that many members share our views and will work together for this purpose.

63. These proposals deal principally with improvements in our procedures. If implemented, and I confess quite frankly that I am by no means sanguine that they will be, they would put us in a better position to deal with the important issues; but the complexity of the issues themselves will not be lessened.

64. Although they manifest themselves in a variety of troubling ways, including open conflicts, it is now apparent that the principal concerns of most Members here are, in fact, economic. The United Nations and its agencies have their work cut out for them if we are to move closer to a more just and equitable world economic order. The barriers to success are enormous as unemployment and inflation continue to plague even the wealthiest countries. Unless a spirit of reasonableness prevails, unless demands and responses are tailored to present economic realities, I must caution that even in Canada, which is far from being the least generous of the developed countries, pressures will develop to focus on our own considerable problems even to the exclusion of the international consequences. I need hardly tell the Assembly that we are not alone in this difficulty.

65. Canada's goal is to build on the foundations it helped to create through its co-chairmanship of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation. Given the proper climate we will work hard to devise a strategy that is both broadly acceptable and realistic. In the coming weeks, Canada's representatives here and at other United Nations and related meetings will announce additional Canadian financial commitments to a large number of international organizations. I shall not take time today to relate the details. I do wish, however, to say a word about food aid.

66. The world food shortage has been eased by good harvests in many countries. However, the factors which gave rise to the recent crisis are still present, and, as many representatives know, recent studies concur in the likelihood of a shortfall in the next five to ten years. One proposal to improve world food security concerns the idea of a 500,000-ton emergency grain reserve. Canada previously announced a willingness to contribute, along with other donors. I am now able to announce that, subject to Parliamentary approval, we would be willing to provide the

⁷ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Plenary Meetings*, 5th meeting, paras. 4-32.

equivalent of \$7.5 million in food grain—roughly 50,000 tons or 10 per cent of the total objective.

67. At this session we must establish the machinery for developing a new international development strategy for the third development decade. This task provides us with a rare opportunity to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the United Nations. We can take advantage of it, or we can allow our deliberations to deteriorate into sterile rhetorical exchanges which will sap the goodwill of those who must give and deepen the bitterness of the receivers. Let us resolve now to choose the first course.

68. Since I last spoke to this Assembly there have been important developments with respect to the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. This historic Conference illustrates very well some of the best and some of the worst aspects of United Nations deliberations and processes. Without the United Nations there is little doubt that management and control of the oceans and their resources would have deteriorated into anarchy. The Conference is, therefore, one of the United Nations great achievements; its originators and all who have participated deserve great credit. But it is an agonizingly slow process.

69. In the past 12 months many countries, including Canada, have extended their fishing jurisdiction over living resources in their coastal waters out to 200 miles. While it is true that these actions are based upon the common will of States reflected in the draft conference texts, it is also true that before that point could be reached many fish stocks had become dangerously depleted, vital elements of the world's fishing industry were jeopardized and serious confrontations developed between traditionally friendly countries.

70. There are legitimate and complex reasons why the negotiations were difficult. But we cannot ignore the fact either that old habits and patterns are hard to abandon, and it is ironic in some respects that only by acting in advance of the conclusion of the Conference did Canada and countries that took similar action enhance the United Nations and the undoubted value of the Conference. This lesson should, and I hope will, lend new urgency to the important work of the Conference that remains to be completed. We have taken 10 years to come this far, and the gains will be dissipated by a series of unilateral actions unless a comprehensive agreed international régime comes into force very soon.

71. It should be self-evident, but sometimes, strangely, it is not, that all of our painfully slow progress towards a more just and well ordered society rests on the fragile assumption that we can create and preserve a peaceful world. No argument should be necessary in defence of that proposition. Yet we continue to witness new outbreaks of violence and to hear from leaders genuinely convinced that the only path to their objectives leads across the battlefield. That belief is prevalent at present in parts of southern Africa.

72. Soon we shall be discussing the most recent plan for the attainment of majority rule in Rhodesia. Canada fully supports the plan not only because we believe that it provides the basis for a fair and equitable solution but also

because we reject totally the alternative of further bloodshed. There must be no lessening of our resolve to see the end of the present illegal minority Rhodesian régime, and for that reason we must redouble our efforts and our commitment to peaceful means. Otherwise, whatever the eventual outcome, it will have about it the smell of failure and the sad realization that good can be achieved only through death and destruction.

73. In the Middle East the issues are even more complex and the dangers to world security proportionately greater. All of us are hoping that present initiatives and negotiations will prove successful and today, as in the past, Canada urges all concerned to recognize fully their awesome responsibility to make every effort and explore every avenue that can lead to a peaceful and permanent solution to long-standing differences.

74. Canada remains committed to the framework for peace embodied in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Our support for Israel's right to exist as defined by those resolutions is firm and unequivocal. We deplore, and we shall continue to do so, all efforts within this Assembly and elsewhere to attribute patently false motives to Israel or to diminish its status and rights within the United Nations or as a legitimate member of the world community.

75. Canada believes that all countries in the region need and have a right to expect more than just another cease-fire or merely a formal end to belligerency. If this kind of peace is to be achieved, the crucial issues of territory must be solved. The only truly secure borders—those which are freely recognized by the parties on either side of them—must be determined by negotiations within the framework of resolution 242 (1967). Until then, we believe that nothing should be done unilaterally or illegally to change or predetermine the status of any part of the occupied territories. We regret that such actions are still being taken without regard to their effect on the prospects for peace. It is also clear that any resolution of territorial issues, if it is indeed to bring about the lasting peace that all desire, must provide a just, humanitarian and political solution for the Palestinian Arab people by which they can live in peace without threatening the security of any country in the region. Any solution for the Palestinian Arabs must of course include their clear and unequivocal acceptance of Israel's permanent existence as their neighbour. During this Assembly, we should bring our weight to bear to bring about an early resumption of negotiations and not attempt to substitute empty debates or one-sided resolutions for the complicated, slow, but essential process of working out a settlement by the parties themselves.

76. Obviously, the Middle East situation has reached a crucial stage. For all concerned, these are days of opportunity. We must pray that they act wisely and with a full awareness of the awful consequences of unwise actions.

77. For, whenever there is a potential for conflict these days, we must not only contemplate localized, limited hostilities, frightful as those always are. We know that each new flare-up wherever it occurs in the world is a potential threat to us all and even to world survival. We must remind those who would risk the use of arms that they are

endangering more than the lives of their own people. Every weapon fired in anger is aimed, potentially, at the heart of civilization. Thus we have a right and a duty to speak out; for what is at stake is in truth the peace of Canada and of every other country in the world today.

78. Because this is the simple truth, no problem is of greater concern to this Assembly than disarmament, but, equally, no subject has more frustrated our efforts and disappointed our peoples. Next year's special session can provide us with an opportunity to move towards real disarmament. Canada was a sponsor of the resolution calling for the session [*resolution 31/189 B*], and we shall put forward specific proposals to make it a success.

79. But we cannot wait for the special session. The need is immediate to improve and strengthen the international non-proliferation system, implement the non-proliferation Treaty more effectively and re-examine the risks and benefits in various nuclear cycles and processes.

80. If anything is more frightening than the prospect of rapidly escalating local hostilities, it is the nightmare of unrestrained nuclear proliferation with all its attendant horrors. I find it difficult to understand how anyone among the world's leaders could consider that an expansion in the number of nuclear-weapon States would contribute to greater world stability. Canada, despite its known competence in the field, rejected the nuclear-weapons option long ago. Now we are making every effort to ensure that others do likewise. We shall co-operate, in terms of nuclear supplies and technology, only with those countries which have signed the non-proliferation Treaty or are otherwise committed to safeguards of full scope. We are encouraged by the fact that some other nuclear suppliers, including Australia and Sweden, have adopted a similar policy. We hope that there will be more.

81. For Canada recognizes that, with the inevitable decline and increasing costs of conventional energy sources, much of the world will have no choice but to turn to nuclear sources to meet energy demands. We appreciate also that there are legitimate differences of opinion on the question of the safest and most efficient means of utilizing nuclear resources and technology. This is true even in countries whose commitment to non-proliferation is total and unquestioned.

82. Canada therefore welcomes and supports the proposal made at the London summit meeting⁸ for a thorough study of alternative fuel cycles that avoid the use of plutonium or improve safeguards.⁹ We commend the United States for its initiatives in this field and hope that all countries will give it their full support. This subject is much too broad and too important to be dealt with in a few moments. I hope that this Assembly will provide the time for a full-scale discussion, for there can be no subject of greater importance.

83. Because of Canada's special interest, I hope and expect that there will be an opportunity also to discuss United

Nations peace-keeping activities. In the Middle East, Cyprus and South Asia, United Nations peace-keeping forces or observer groups are in place. Soon there may be further requests involving Zimbabwe and Namibia.

84. Canada has consistently responded to United Nations requests to provide personnel as available for peace-keeping, because we believe this to be a significant way to contribute to world peace. But in Canada there is growing concern about peace keeping for two reasons. First, many of the disputes which led to the need for peace-keeping forces appear no nearer to solution than they were one, two and even three decades ago. We recognize that these basic and intractable problems may indeed take a lot of time and cannot be settled overnight. What we wish, but do not always see, is evidence that the parties are intent on negotiating an end to their disputes. Secondly, although the two most recent forces—UNEF and the UNDOF—are being properly paid for through collective assessment, we have failed to reach general agreement on how future peace-keeping operations should be financed and UNFICYP is over \$50 million in debt. If operations are not properly funded, many Members of the United Nations will not be able to afford to provide forces—a situation which will not be healthy either for this Organization or for the concept of peace-keeping.

85. In considering future participation, Canada will weigh these two considerations: whether peace-keeping forces will contribute to a settlement rather than provide temporary relief or even contribute to a perpetuation of the problem, and whether arrangements to pay for them represent the common will of Members to assume the financial burden and permit troop contributors to be selected from a broad cross-section of countries.

86. I have no doubt we will hear a great deal about human rights during the coming months, and not only here at the United Nations. Within a few days the review conference on the Final Act adopted by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at Helsinki opens in Belgrade. Canada, as one of the signers of that document, will make its views known at that time.

87. But we must also recognize that the United Nations has a major responsibility in the human rights field; one we have not always discharged fully or effectively.

88. Last year we welcomed the coming into force of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights [*see resolution 2200 A (XXI)*]. Paradoxically, however, at a time when these new human rights instruments have defined more fully the rights of persons in States which have ratified these instruments and have created new machinery to monitor the compliance of Member States with their legal and moral obligations the gap between the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the practice of States has widened noticeably. It is regrettable that only one third of the total membership of the United Nations has ratified the major human rights covenants, and that even fewer States have accepted the Optional Protocol [*ibid.*]. The various monitoring and reporting procedures are too slow and cumbersome to be truly effective, and offer little tangible assistance to victims of violations.

⁸ Downing Street Summit Conference, held in London from 7 to 8 May 1977.

⁹ See *The Department of State Bulletin*, vol. LXXVI, No. 1980 (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), p. 585.

89. More progress can and must be made in those areas where abuses are flagrant and persistent. We should direct our efforts towards finding a means of monitoring compliance with the Declaration against torture passed by the General Assembly in 1975.¹⁰ We should improve the procedures for screening complaints and for acting on those that reflect serious abuse. We should consider better procedures for co-ordination of all United Nations activity in defence of human rights.

90. We recognize that the Charter of the United Nations obliges Member States to respect the sovereignty of others. But it is surely consistent with acceptance of the principle of non-interference to urge more complete and universal recognition of other freely assumed obligations—the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

91. The fact is that on this as on all the other issues I have mentioned the performance of the United Nations and of all of its Member States is being examined more closely and critically than ever before, for the sound and obvious reason that the stakes are higher than ever before.

92. I have spoken critically of some aspects of our past performance and present practices. I have done so not out of any desire to weaken this Organization but because Canada is convinced that without a marked change of attitude on the part of Members and without the reforms that are so clearly necessary, the erosion of the effectiveness and prestige of the United Nations will continue.

93. We must dedicate ourselves to work for this Organization as if our lives depended on it. In truth they probably do.

94. The PRESIDENT: Before I call on the next speaker, may I remind representatives that the General Assembly, at its 5th plenary meeting on 23 September, decided that out of consideration for the other speakers and in order to preserve the dignity of the general debates, delegations should refrain from expressing their congratulations in the General Assembly hall after a speech has been delivered. Therefore I should like to ask representatives to be kind enough to enforce that decision and to express their congratulations to the speaker in some convenient location outside the hall.

95. Mr. CONSALVI (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, it is particularly pleasant for me, on behalf of the delegation of Venezuela, to extend to you our most cordial congratulations on your election as President of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. As the first Ambassador of Venezuela to Yugoslavia, I know well and have the utmost admiration for the role your country has played in world politics. Hence, my words go beyond mere formality when I state that we are convinced that under your stewardship and guidance the tasks and negotiations of this General Assembly will be particularly fruitful, not only for the vast group of countries

we belong to, but for all Member States of the United Nations; in fact, for all the peoples of the world who have placed their faith in it.

96. At the same time, I should like to express, on behalf of my delegation, our appreciation to Mr. Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe for his dedication and commitment to the international cause. Having been the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations for the last three years, I should also like to extend our greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, whose loyalty to the exacting and complex duties of his high post has earned our respect.

97. I should like to welcome most cordially the countries which have now joined our Organization: the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Republic of Djibouti, the former an ancient people, the latter a new country. Viet Nam gave us lessons of heroism and reaffirmed what history had already taught us: that no force in the world, however mighty, can vanquish those who live or die for the independence and sovereignty of their country. Venezuela had the privilege of participating in the United Nations Mission¹¹ which observed the process of independence of Djibouti, at the time of the referendum. We are pleased to express our solidarity to that country.

98. This General Assembly is gathering at a moment of expectations and shadows. To the old conflicts for which the Organization has been trying to find balanced formulas for solutions and settlements, others have been added which are no less serious and grave, presenting a picture of risks and dangers, to which the Secretary-General referred clearly, although soberly, when he pointed out that, without doubt, 1977 had been a year of growing anxiety for the international community.

99. In the face of political tensions, whether ancient or not, the economic and social problems of the third world become more serious from day to day. Yet, we come to this session of the General Assembly convinced that dialogue and tenacity in negotiations are the only means to attain the solutions we seek.

100. This Session of the General Assembly will have among the most important items on its agenda the continuation of the North-South dialogue. The United Nations is the most appropriate framework for these negotiations since the problems raised are of direct concern to all our peoples. The results of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation have already been reviewed here and will continue to be the subject of our debates. We are certain that the negotiators in Paris did not spend their time in vain. Today, the conviction is gaining ground that the challenge mankind faces must be met in accordance with the terms and objectives stated by the third world.

101. We, the developing countries, may have a variety of interests, but we do have essentially common objectives. In this fundamental unity lies the negotiating power of the third world; co-operative actions among developing coun-

¹⁰ Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see resolution 3452 (XXX)).

¹¹ United Nations Mission to Observe the Referendum and Elections in French Somaliland (Djibouti).

tries strengthen and consolidate it. Such militant solidarity among the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America—which in turn is an important element in enabling us to face the North-South dialogue with greater chances of success—permits our commitment to the principle of collective self-reliance to assume an ever-increasing importance. The efforts of each and every one supplement the efforts of the whole to attain our common objectives.

102. Despite the gravity of our problems, we have not adopted intransigent positions nor have we made impossible claims. As the Venezuelan Minister, Mr. Manuel Pérez Guerrero said here only a few days ago: “For our part, we are equally determined to pursue international co-operation and to defend our interests.”¹²

103. At the Paris stage of the North-South dialogue, the results obtained were limited in scope, as some far-reaching problems such as the protection of the purchasing power of the export earnings of developing countries and the problem of growing indebtedness, were practically overlooked. The former is basic; the latter is urgent. Our countries cannot forgo the goals of the new international economic order, and we are certain that no one seriously doubts that this is the only course and the only choice open both to the developing countries which demand it and to those societies whose progress and affluence were nourished on injustice and contempt for the rights of others.

104. There is a definite contrast between the economic and social restrictions imposed on our countries and the uncontrollable, suicidal explosion of military expenditure and the arms race. Upon my appointment by the Secretary-General, I had the honour to participate in the group of consultant experts which brought up to date the report entitled *Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and Military Expenditures [A/32/88 and Corr.1 and Add.1]*. The report rightly points out that it is necessary to disclose openly the dangers inherent in a continued arms race, and to dispel the illusion that peace and security can coexist with immense stockpiles of the means of destruction.

105. This is an objective report. Its conclusions are alarming beyond doubt. The arms race and military expenditures increase or remain at disquieting levels. Over \$350 billion are invested every year in the manufacture of and trade in weapons. Scientists by the thousands are devoting their creative talents as well as the prodigious and boundless resources of science to the sole, exclusive purpose of making better weapons, increasing their destructive capability and laying the groundwork for the annihilation of mankind to happen in the shortest possible time. It is no longer enough to stockpile hundreds of thousands of kilos of plutonium in the arsenals of the super-Powers. On the one hand, nuclear physicists intensify the destructive power of weapons; while, on the other hand, certain schools of strategists and political scientists are busy designing the setting for presumed nuclear wars which they call “limited”. Would it not be actually absurd to speculate on the possibility of one nuclear Power’s agreeing with another on an exercise of limited destruction. And, in any case, if

they did agree on this, it is doubtful that it would be within their own borders.

106. The Secretary-General points out in his annual report on the work of the Organization that every day \$900 million are spent for military purposes and he goes on to say:

“In a world where scientific and technological capability is one of the keys to the future, 25 per cent of the world’s scientific manpower and 40 per cent of all research and development spending is engaged for military purposes.” [A/32/1, sect. IV.]

Let us reflect on these awesome facts described by the Secretary-General in his report.

107. As a consequence of this crisis—which reveals very grave symptoms among mankind and in the present-day world—nuclear proliferation has become a definite threat. Without a doubt, it is a threat which can and does arouse the utmost anxiety because it brings into the open the fact that power is contagious for many countries, as is the idea of the false prestige of belonging to the nuclear club.

108. Venezuela will continue to support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace so as to give effect to the aspirations of the countries of certain regions of the world and because it is one of the most reliable means to strengthen international peace and security.

109. It was especially significant for Latin America that the United States signed the Additional Protocol I of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco). We trust that this will serve as an example for those Powers which have not yet adhered to Additional Protocols I and II of the Tlatelolco Treaty, with a view to enhancing the image of our continent as the first denuclearized zone in the world.

110. The problems of the arms race cannot be detached from the economic and social problems which are the basis of the North-South dialogue. This is also a moral issue to which we cannot be indifferent. Military expenditures and their soaring costs affect and prevent rational agreements in the domain of just solutions. The army of scientists whose talents are used entirely in the service of destruction should have a destiny in accord with the human condition. Hunger and the world food crisis can be adequately surmounted only by means of science and technology. The energy problem, which is rendered more acute by voracious consumption of traditional resources, such as gas and oil, could now have had different options had not research on alternate sources, like solar energy, been held back by the large transnational corporations which for more than a century maintained a monopoly over the traditional sources. As a result of this lack of foresight, all of mankind now faces an uncertain future.

111. It is only the political decision of states which can halt the uncontrolled race towards world destruction and, especially, the will of the great Powers which, because they possess nuclear weapons, profess to manage the political balance of the world.

¹² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Plenary Meetings*, 108th meeting, para. 69.

112. Because of the awareness of this danger, and in the hope of achieving tangible results, it was decided to convene a special session of the General Assembly in 1978 devoted to disarmament the success of which will depend on the unanimous effort and the active participation of all States Members of the United Nations.

113. Since the beginning of the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea at Caracas in 1974, the position of Venezuela regarding the exploitation of the sea-bed has been clear and firm in defence of the basic principles which the countries of the third world have upheld.

114. We must emphasize two fundamental aspects of this problem which we deem to be of paramount importance in establishing the new international economic order for future generations. In the first place, the régime for exploitation to be adopted, which will regulate the use and benefits of an area corresponding to two thirds of our planet; and, secondly, the institution of a resource policy which would provide the mineral-producing developing countries with effective protection from any adverse economic effects that might follow from an unrestrained exploitation of the sea-bed.

115. In the Conference on the Law of the Sea we have always supported the establishment of a unitary system for exploiting the resources in the international area of the sea-bed. Our position is based on our acceptance without reservation of the principles of the indivisibility of the area and of the discretionary power of the Authority over its activities, which could be regulated.

116. Establishing a strong Authority will guarantee that the exploitation of the resources of the area will be for the benefit of the international community.

117. The indivisibility of the area is a concept which is not subject to negotiation since this represents the effective application of the principle of the common heritage of mankind, the validity of which has been recognized by all countries represented here. The indivisibility of the area in turn conditions the existence of an Authority with broad discretionary powers which, within the framework of the Convention, will enable it to decide on the manner of exploitation and the use and distribution of the resources thus obtained.

118. Nevertheless, in the spirit of co-operation which has always guided us, we are prepared to take a position which will clear the way for an agreement for the benefit of all mankind.

119. To this end we have proposed at the Conference on the Law of the Sea that a compromise be adopted between the unitary system of exploitation and what has been called the parallel system, on the understanding that the system to be adopted by way of negotiation be of a temporary character and that all the areas granted under this system automatically revert to the Authority at the end of the period stipulated in the Convention.

120. The second aspect which disturbs us in connexion with the problem of exploiting the sea-bed is that of the countries dependent on the export of minerals. They should not be harmed by this new economic activity.

121. An irrational and unrestrained exploitation of those immense resources by a restricted number of transnational corporations represents an obvious danger to the export earnings and, therefore, to the development plans, of a considerable number of developing countries. At the Conference of the Law of the Sea a formula has been proposed whereby production in the sea-bed would be regulated so as to be complementary to land-based production. It is not that the third world is opposed to the exploitation of the resources of the sea as the spokesmen of certain industrialized countries repeatedly maintain. The fundamental issue is that the sea-bed should be exploited in an orderly way, without damage to countries whose economies depend to a large degree on minerals or raw materials from the sea-bed, avoiding at all costs the establishment of a monopoly for the exploitation of resources which, ultimately, are the common heritage of mankind, for present and future generations.

122. Human rights constitute one of the subjects to which our Organization devotes time; much effort and perseverance have been concentrated on them.

123. Human rights being one of the basic pillars of our international policy, as we reiterated in the joint declaration of the President of Venezuela and the President of the United States,¹³ we should like to state now our intention of supporting those initiatives in the field of human rights which tend to strengthen and promote strict surveillance of and compliance with human rights, wherever attempts are made to violate or disregard them. This is why we have sponsored initiatives in this field through our regional forum, by ratifying the American Convention on Human Rights,¹⁴ designed to promote the dignity of the individual throughout the hemisphere.

124. The human rights issue is gaining momentum, and the participation of the international community in preserving them has become more urgent and indispensable. We believe that human rights extend into the universal ambit. The United Nations Charter is, in this respect, a clear commitment.

125. One of the contemporary features which most affect essential human rights is the expression of violence in the world, in different ways, such as the kidnapping of persons and hijacking of means of transport, the seizure of hostages and the assault and killing of innocent human beings. These acts are a clear violation of the individual security and the integrity of human beings, as well as of peace among nations.

126. In this very forum we have warned that, rather than devote ourselves to an exhaustive task of interpreting violence, what is required is to take action. Venezuela has also indicated its criteria in regard to activities to which the term "terrorism" should not be applied. They are those that are part of the liberation struggles now being waged.

¹³ See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 13, No. 27 (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 962-963.

¹⁴ See *American Convention on Human Rights, "Pact of San José, Costa Rica"*, Treaty Series No. 36 (Washington, D.C., Organization of American States, 1970).

“... violence which takes the form of criminal action can never be a political act. No cause whatsoever, however noble or justified, can mingle with deeds associating or identifying it with manifestations of delinquency or *lèse humanité*.”¹⁵

127. Venezuela will continue to participate actively in all efforts made here to bring about the prompt drafting and adoption of a set of rules to make the will of the international community effective in eliminating the scourge of violence and, as stated by the President of Venezuela in this same forum last year, to fulfil the wish for a coherent international response capable of facing the scourge in rational terms.¹⁶

128. When mention is made of the human rights question, we must all, as a matter of course, think of Africa and, in particular, of the peoples subjected to the *apartheid* régime. There have been few doctrines in history, without excepting nazism, as shameful as the one practised by the régimes of South Africa and Rhodesia, which the former extends to and imposes on the Territory of Namibia. This year Venezuela attended the Maputo International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the Lagos World Conference for Action against *Apartheid*. In the Security Council we have supported and will always resolutely support the sanctions upon the illegal Rhodesian régime that are necessary to clear the way for majority rule, and we shall contribute as necessary to ensure that Namibia obtains its independence, in accordance with United Nations decisions. Acting on our deeply-rooted conviction, Venezuela will continue to condemn the policy of the Pretoria régime. It is this Pretoria régime, which has relied on such ample and exceptional technological co-operation, that is now preparing to carry out nuclear tests and explosions and is undoubtedly the central point of the crisis which threatens all of southern Africa.

129. The immense economic investments of the transnational corporations in that region, which are the subject of an impressive report by the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations,¹⁷ have without any doubt generated the danger to world peace represented today by the conflict in southern Africa.

130. As a Latin American and as a Venezuelan, I should like to refer with satisfaction to the recent achievements of the five countries which are members of the Andean Pact: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. With the agreement on automotive programming signed in the capital of Ecuador, our countries have taken an extraordinarily significant step towards integration, opening the way to a firm and powerful economic future, capable of generating the balanced development of our peoples and their economies.

131. The process of economic integration is a political fact which is taking place in Latin America as the only valid option for our peoples. We are convinced that Latin American unity is indispensable, and that is why we are

determined to strengthen it. To be sure, the political decision was not a simple matter, as it was not easy to implement Decision 24 of the Cartagena Agreement,¹⁸ which drew up rules for foreign capital in the subregion. The agreement on automotive programming was reached after a number of difficulties. These were encouraged from outside, as will be logically understood: the pervasive influence of transnational corporations conspiring against any economic effort which does not comply with their conditions. This proves, once again, how urgent it is to have a code of conduct to regulate the activities of those corporations.

132. We Venezuelans will make every possible effort to strengthen the Andean Pact and to tighten the links binding our peoples together. This is one of the basic ideas of our international policy. The new economic order will of necessity be tied to experiments such as this, or will build on them.

133. In other words, we, the countries of the third world, must open up our own ways, and among the possible ones, integration will give us strength in addition to other advantages, because there is strength in being united, and five together carry more weight than five separately, as in the case of the Andean group.

134. Lastly, on behalf of the President of Venezuela and of our people, I must refer to the new treaties on the Panama Canal signed on 7 September by the Latin American Republic of Panama and the United States of America. During the entire twentieth century the Canal has been a source of differences between our countries and the powerful nation that kept a colonial enclave there, dividing the small isthmus country in two. The new treaties returning to the Republic of Panama its sovereignty over the entire territory of the nation were signed in Washington in the presence and with the support of the peoples of Latin America. President Carlos Andrés Pérez, in his first message to Venezuelans in March 1974, stated that the problem of the Panama Canal was not only a problem for Panama nor exclusively a Latin American problem, but a problem for all free peoples in the world. And here, before the General Assembly in 1976, he reiterated similar views. Before the Organization of American States, during his visit to the United States the President of Venezuela said:

“Our relations with the United States cannot be good relations unless this problem is satisfactorily solved with full recognition of Panamanian sovereignty”.

This long-standing Latin American claim has now been satisfied in the new Treaties. Panama has recovered its sovereignty. There are no Latin Americans nor Latin American countries which did not feel that the Panamanian cause was theirs.

135. Now the treaties and the fate of relations between the United States and Latin America, as well as harmony and understanding in this part of the world, are in the hands of the Congress of the United States, whose ratification will make the treaties legally valid. We have no doubt that the

¹⁵ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Plenary Meetings*, 67th meeting, para. 43.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 39 and 40.

¹⁷ See document E/C.10/26.

¹⁸ Agreement on Andean Subregional Integration, signed at Bogotá on 26 May 1969.

United States Congress, the source of legal power in this great nation, will ratify these treaties. The nearly 150 countries that constitute the world community will be waiting for the major decision to be taken in Washington.

136. The deceptive campaign mounted by those who represent the past and those who represent obscure and powerful economic interests to the effect that there is no Panama Canal but a "United States canal in Panama" not only constitutes an attempt to mislead a great people, such as that of the United States, but is also an attempt to offend the entire world community meeting here under the auspices of this General Assembly. Despite this neo-colonial campaign, we Venezuelans are confident that the United States Congress will understand the rights of a small and noble people and will exercise the intelligence and understanding that President Carter exercised when he signed the Treaties.

137. I conclude by reiterating that the delegation of Venezuela is certain that our debates will be fruitful and that the spirit of co-operation will guide our negotiations. Ever since the founding of the United Nations, my country has been a faithful believer in its principles and has loyally complied with our commitments. Today more than ever, we place our faith in the role of this world Organization.

138. Mr. OREJA AGUIRRE (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, my first words will be words of welcome and of farewell. Welcome to you, Mr. President, whom I am honoured to congratulate on your election to the presidency. Your long and brilliant leadership of the delegation of Yugoslavia in the United Nations justifies our hope that you will accomplish an outstanding and brilliant task in guiding the work of this General Assembly.

139. May I also address words of farewell and cordial gratitude to Mr. Amerasinghe, the representative of Sri Lanka in this forum, under whose illustrious and skilful guidance the work of the last session of the General Assembly and of the Conference on the Law of the Sea progressed so satisfactorily.

140. We have among us two new Members—Viet Nam and Djibouti. We warmly welcome and congratulate them, and express the desire of the Government of Spain to establish relations of friendship and co-operation in all spheres with them.

141. It is for me a particularly pleasant duty to reiterate our tribute of admiration and gratitude to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who brilliantly executed his duties during his first term of office, and it is for Spain a certain guarantee of the accomplishment of the important tasks that this Organization must face that Mr. Waldheim was re-elected to a post of such lofty responsibility for a new term of office, during which we are sure that he will flourish and achieve much, as is guaranteed by his competence, prudence and impartiality.

142. Since the general elections held in my country on 15 June for Spain a new era of international dimensions has opened up.

143. The Government, in defining its foreign policy, has had very much in mind the purposes and principles of the

United Nations, this Organization which is dedicated to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promoting co-operation and friendly relations among all countries within a framework of justice and freedom.

144. In this context, together with our active participation in the Western and European world, what is particularly important is the realistic and fruitful reaffirmation of the close links my country maintains with Ibero-American nations and those in the Mediterranean area. All of this is part of the pursuit of universal objectives defined in three kinds of action: the promotion of détente and disarmament, the defence of human rights and the establishment of a fair and equitable international economic order.

145. The state of international relations is hardly a cause for optimism. But we would be making a serious mistake in our assessment of the potentialities of this Organization were we merely to adjust our words and deeds to a passive recognition that nothing can be done. It would be unfair to consider that the present situation does not already represent considerable progress compared with previous situations through which we lived and suffered.

146. From this point of view, the action of the United Nations, which is still imperfect and still subject to the pressures of the great Powers, to the fears of the small Powers and the selfishness of all, is considerable. As far as Spain is concerned, and having mentioned the important inspiration of the Organization in our actions, I should like to refer particularly to the moments when, in the course of the past year, co-operation between my country and the United Nations was particularly clear.

147. On 28 September 1976, I had the honour of signing, in the presence of the Secretary-General and on behalf of the Government of Spain, the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. On 27 April of this year, on the occasion of his visit to the United Nations, the President of the Government of Spain delivered to the Secretary-General the instruments of ratification of these Covenants. This represented an important step in my country's relations with the United Nations, in a direction which Mr. Adolfo Suárez described when he expressed "the importance the Government of the Monarchy attaches to respect for and application of inalienable and irrevocable rights" and reaffirmed:

"... my country's determination to expand international action to the utmost so that these human rights, of which this Organization is so rightly the spokesman and catalyst, will increasingly become a fundamental principle in relations among nations."

In the same context, we must include Spain's accession to ILO Conventions 87¹⁹ and 98,²⁰ which guarantee freedom of trade unions.

148. Proper respect for and due protection of human rights constitute, and will continue to constitute, basic principles of my country's law and policy.

¹⁹ See *Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Conference, 1919-1949* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1949), p. 765.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 907.

149. Action undertaken by my Government, together with this Organization, to safeguard human rights must be viewed as the expression of a political will. From that standpoint, I should like to state that any initiative conducive to improving respect for human rights throughout the world will always find firm support in Spain.

150. Various circumstances have contributed to making the year that has elapsed since the last session of the General Assembly one that can be described as the year of human rights. This was not the result of organized action or of a joint international initiative. Various forces which play a decisive role in the world scene today have helped to bring human rights continuously, and often polemically, to the forefront of international relations during the past 12 months.

151. These polemics are in turn included in the most general scope of what constitutes the essence of détente. For some, détente would be meaningless outside the framework of a process for the progressive affirmation of human freedom. For others, the emphasis placed on it and the corresponding description of interference in internal affairs would seriously endanger other sectors of global negotiations involved in détente.

152. For our part, I should like to state our deep conviction that human rights cannot be parcelled out. Full respect for them must emerge from the joint affirmation of the values of freedom and justice. We believe that justice will develop best in an atmosphere of freedom.

153. The fact is that today, and in what we feel is a positive way, the idea is gaining ground that human rights must be a basic factor in international relations. Violation of human rights, as has been demonstrated in many cases, is a factor of instability and insecurity in international life and, consequently, the decision as to the desirability or otherwise of implementing those rights is not a matter for individual States alone.

154. Consequently, Spain will tirelessly and continuously strive to ensure that the human person and his rights command primary attention and respect in every corner of the world, North and South, East and West. But Spain will also seek to ensure that this issue is understood in all its complexity. It is a matter of safeguarding freedom, but also of doing away with the dialectics of economic and political domination which, while preventing the normal development of men and nations, also make difficult the establishment and maintenance of material conditions in which freedom can be asserted and developed.

155. Year after year, in the general debates of this Assembly, we observe with concern that the same focal-points of conflict exist and that the same tensions remain unresolved.

156. In the first place, the situation in the Middle East continues to be a danger to the peace and security of the entire world, and particularly threatens the stability of a region, the Mediterranean, of which my country is a coastal State. For this reason and because Spain has always defended the just causes of the Arab Nation, my country had hoped that the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East could have met this year.

157. Those hopes seem to have been shared by our Assembly, which last year adopted resolution 31/62 calling for the early convening of that Conference. But the facts were otherwise, since the Conference cannot be held unless the parties concerned in the conflict are prepared to comply with the United Nations resolutions and particularly the resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

158. We continue to consider as unalterable the premises for a just and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East to be respect for the right of existence of all countries in the area, within secure and recognized borders; the withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied since the war of 1967; and recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

159. In this connexion, the Government of Spain is concerned about the continuation of certain practices which affect the territories that have been occupied since 1967, and particularly the establishment of Israeli settlements in those Arab territories, all of which constitutes a serious barrier to a just and peaceful solution.

160. The maintenance of normal and friendly relations with all countries of the world is a principle of our international relations. A start towards a solution to the Middle East would enable us to give effect to this desire and contemplate a future of normal relations with all the countries in the area.

161. The situation in southern Africa also seriously endangers peace and security and constitutes an open defiance of the entire international community. The *apartheid* system, the persistence of the illegal minority régime in Southern Rhodesia and the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa are three aspects of the same reality of oppression and injustice which has prevailed for such a long time in that part of the world, and where the situation is progressively deteriorating.

162. The Government of Spain joins the international community in condemning every aspect of the policy of *apartheid*, including the establishment of the so-called "bantustans".

163. The Government of Spain is following with keen interest and supports efforts intended to attain the prompt and peaceful independence of Zimbabwe and Namibia with majority Governments.

164. Another critical area of tension on the African continent is that in the Maghreb regarding the decolonization of Western Sahara. Under circumstances known to all, Spain put an end once and for all to its presence and to its responsibilities in the Territory on 26 February 1976, specifying its position in the communication addressed by the Permanent Representative of my country to the Secretary-General on that same date.²¹ Nevertheless, we are following with grave concern the development of events in that region.

²¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1976*, document S/11997.

165. Spain trusts that formulas may be found which will facilitate the elimination of tension in the zone and will lead to stability and peaceful understanding in Maghreb within the framework of a just and lasting solution of the problem of Western Sahara. Spain considers that such a solution should be sought in agreement with the parties, by harmonizing their respective and legitimate interests and taking into account the expression of the will of the people of the Sahara.

166. May I recall that in its resolution 3458 B (XXX), which took note of the Declaration of Madrid of 14 November 1975,²² the General Assembly reaffirms

“... the inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of all the Saharan populations originating in the Territory”.

Likewise, General Assembly resolution 31/45 adopted on 1 December 1976, in reaffirming this principle, called on OAU to seek a solution to the problem.

167. We are aware of the risks involved in the present situation in the region. Spain, motivated by the peaceful aims which are at the root of our foreign policy, and in a desire for friendship, good neighbourliness and co-operation with all the countries of the area, makes an appeal for concord and dialogue between the parties which my country would be prepared to promote in so far as it is possible for us to do so.

168. In the same spirit it is the intention of my Government to co-operate in any humanitarian efforts of an international character that may be undertaken and for our part we shall take every step possible that may contribute to détente in that particularly sensitive area.

169. The question of Cyprus must be included also in the catalogue of situations of unresolved tensions. We do not wish to nor could we dictate solutions which must come from the freely expressed will of the population of the island. But the interests of the international community lie in promoting understanding and freedom without the participation of elements alien to that population and always for the sake of maintaining the sovereignty, integrity and independence of a State Member of this Organization.

170. A fundamental concern of the international community must be to consider the conflicts and their basic causes and to direct our efforts at pacification precisely to eliminating the causes of conflicts. We view with the utmost concern the particularly grave effects which the arms race has on the maintenance and the spread of centres of conflict. Political and economic interests intervene and nourish conflicts which, while no solution of their basic causes is found, grow progressively more serious as a result of the indiscriminate use of increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons. Thus there is a vicious circle of actions and reactions, the final effects of which cannot be foreseen.

171. Security and disarmament must be combined and must gradually replace the increasingly unrealistic notion

that security to be such must be armed. This idea will always lead to a search for absolute levels of security which in turn will always mean absolute degrees of insecurity, thus creating an endless arms race seeking an unattainable parity. These observations are true for both nuclear and conventional weapons. Perhaps it is superfluous to insist, once again, on the gigantic deviation of productive resources required for the arms race. We need unarmed security because then the possibilities of war or confrontation are of necessity reduced, but we urgently need also to see to it that disarmament leads to fruitful and firm solutions. That would enable mankind to reach worthy levels of development in an acceptable framework of security.

172. On the basis of these considerations, Spain always looks favourably on every effort made bilaterally or multilaterally, within the United Nations or outside, which are carried out to halt the arms race. My country will always pay particular attention to any negotiating forum which seeks this objective, whether with regard to the limitation of strategic forces, the reduction of forces in central Europe, the possible discussion of similar measures for other geographical areas or, particularly, the convening of a world disarmament conference. Our final objective is and continues to be gradually to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective international control. We should like every aspect of disarmament to be considered in a global framework which would exclude all propaganda but would at the same time be realistic and cover all the causes of possible conflicts in all their complexity and ultimately the fundamental elements of security.

173. Spain considers that the initiative taken with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a constructive one, but we would prefer that the concept of horizontal proliferation should no longer be used in a discriminatory manner and at the same time should be matched with tangible results in regard to the concept of vertical non-proliferation.

174. My Government awaits with confidence the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in the Preparatory Committee for which Spain has been participating very actively. Along this same line of thinking I should like to express the interest we feel in establishing and maintaining denuclearized zones such as the one in the Indian Ocean. In this concept there is the chance of a gradual regional approach to general and complete disarmament and a real possibility of the concept's spreading through clearly defined regional zones.

175. There are today examples of the regionalization of security, as it is encouraged by this Organization, that are worth taking into account and, if possible, imitating. I should like to refer particularly to the results of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which will resume its work in Belgrade during the first days of October this year. The Conference, whose sessions were held at Helsinki and Geneva and will now be held at Belgrade, gives us a good indication of the possibilities and limitations of regional agreements on security items. The Conference, because of its composition and mechanisms, is a forum for equal non-discriminatory participation by large,

²² Tripartite Agreement between the Governments of Mauritania, Morocco and Spain, signed in Madrid on 14 November 1975.

medium and small-sized countries and the results already obtained doubtless assume a reasonable basis of security for all the countries participating in it. This basis was clearly made possible by a balanced and realistic consideration of the factors which fundamentally constitute security. Spain, which has always expressed its profound belief in the virtues of the Conference, will continue to participate in it actively, with hope and with realism.

176. In this context I should particularly like to refer to all of the aspects encompassed by the security of the Mediterranean. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in this respect represents a firm and very promising attempt which we trust will be continued and expanded in this and at future sessions of the Conference, as well as by means of the corresponding bilateral and multilateral contacts. We could not conceive of a solidly cemented European security unless, at the same time, security in the Mediterranean were part of it.

177. This Organization still has to consider colonial situations which have not been resolved and to which Spain attaches particular importance. I refer to the cases of the Malvinas Islands, Belize and Gibraltar.

178. The negotiations now being conducted between Argentina and the United Kingdom on the Malvinas Islands may be described as moderately encouraging. In these negotiations a sincere will to consider all questions and interests at stake has been demonstrated, without the minimum requirements of each of the parties constituting a barrier to a promising spirit of conciliation and understanding. We hope that the dispute over Belize will similarly come to a successful conclusion through a justly negotiated and peaceful settlement.

179. As for Gibraltar, the United Nations has repeatedly defined its doctrine, urging the opening of negotiations to put an end to the colonial status of the Rock. My country has made constant efforts to start these negotiations, and we continue to hope that the United Kingdom will demonstrate the will to negotiate which this Organization has so insistently called upon it to show. For my part, I should like once again to reaffirm Spain's inalienable claim to sovereignty over that territory. At the last plenary session of Spain's Congress of Deputies devoted to a debate on foreign policy, all the Spanish political factions expressed themselves in favour of the reintegration of Gibraltar with Spain.

180. Let it be clear that we are prepared to co-operate with the United Kingdom on the question of Gibraltar in its entirety, taking into account the interests of its inhabitants and facilitating the integration of the Rock with the surrounding area, as the progress of negotiations allows.

181. Finally, within the framework of regional agreements, Spain is pleased that the treaties concluded between the United States and Panama have been signed, paving the way for a satisfactory solution of the question of the Panama Canal.

182. The international configuration of the world today has been shaped on a bipolar pattern, which, imposing itself on other ideological confrontations, divides the world into

two compartments: the industrially developed countries on the one hand and the less developed countries on the other. The world economic crisis which broke out at the end of 1973 contributed to the diversification of that bipolar situation into new and complex realities. Mankind's major challenge is its ability to provide a world-wide solution to the economic problems which afflict it. A strengthening of the framework of interdependence and solidarity among nations, going beyond any desire for domination, and acknowledging the difficulty of economic independence, is therefore a pressing question. That great adventure, perhaps the greatest of our time, is called co-operation which, as the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs has said, deserves continuous, constant and creative effort.

183. The international community, acting through various agencies and particularly through the United Nations is clearly aware of the urgency and gravity of the matter and of its pressing needs.

184. International co-operation has been the subject of debate on various occasions, particularly at the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly. We shall soon take up the task of defining the objectives for the third United Nations development decade.

185. Yet the data available to us, which have been compiled in the Secretary-General's reports, show that a disquieting situation remains, the essential feature of which is the fact that the difference in the income levels of the developed and the less-developed world has continued and has even grown. This picture is profoundly unsatisfactory and calls for continuous action by States, by international institutions and by this very General Assembly of the United Nations, in seeking a more rational conservation and distribution of available resources, thus facilitating the achievement of proper levels of subsistence and well being for the people of the whole world.

186. We must at the same time work harder individually and collectively to change the world economic structure and move towards the establishment of a new international economic order. To do this, we must first ensure fluidity and flexibility in international trade and finance. Any measure likely to prevent the establishment of international barriers must be supported by the international agencies. Secondly, we must seek to stabilize the terms of trade in raw materials and finished products, and to ensure that adequate and safe markets will enable the developing countries to stabilize their balance of payments and thus be in a position to plan their economic development on a longer-term basis.

187. As regards raw materials, in seeking adequate regulation of commodity markets, greater co-operation in the over-all use of energy resources—the very essence of development—must be secured. In this respect, my Government is convinced of the value of the proposal by the Secretary-General, Mr. Waldheim, concerning the establishment of an international energy institute within the United Nations [*see A/32/1, sect. VII*], and we shall duly support the study and the development of this concept when necessary.

188. In fact, the problem of energy resources is one with which my country is particularly concerned, having suf-

ferred intensely from the effects of the crisis. It is well aware of the difficulties and efforts involved in raising and maintaining its national product and its standard of living. That does not prevent us from participating actively and with interest in the international action devoted to that great undertaking which is world co-operation.

189. We have participated in the Conference on International Economic Co-operation among the industrialized countries, between which there are marked differences in economic potential. At that Conference, Spain supported further negotiations to establish a permanent fund for commodities and announced its contribution to the special fund to assist the countries most seriously affected by the economic crisis. I should like to emphasize that, although the results of the North-South Conference were limited, that Conference took a realistic approach to the world's economic problems and in any case it defined the "dynamics of a dialogue" which we consider to be positive.

190. But the Paris dialogue showed its limitations, confirmed by the fact that towards the end of its last session the General Assembly was unable to evaluate the results of the Conference. The dialogue must go on now in every forum and particularly in the United Nations.

191. Spain has also joined the International Fund for Agricultural Development and will make a contribution to it.

192. Spain has recently become a member of the Governing Council of UNDP, and we intend actively to participate in technical co-operation with the countries and areas which need it. We give priority to items requiring Mediterranean co-operation and in this context we have co-operated very actively in UNEP. We note with satisfaction the efforts of the international community to promote new forms of co-operation, so adequately reflected in the series of conferences recently convened by the United Nations, on specific items such as population, food, industrialization and the conference held this year on water²³ and on desertification.²⁴ Above and beyond the major ideological systems or political divergencies mankind faces profound problems which directly affect its survival. It is a question of a more equitable structure for the over-all distribution of resources and of the available wealth. It is a question of making our universe habitable, clean and orderly in terms of human needs and the free development of every human being. We must attack and prevent pollution and have air and water which will make human life less difficult. Ultimately we must collectively participate in designing a world in which human abilities can freely develop and where needs will be adequately met. This gigantic and urgent task requires a combination of political, economic, technical and legal efforts.

193. The United Nations devotes a major part of its endeavours to these needs, and I should like to refer in particular to the progress attained at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

194. The spirit of the Conference and its desire to attain a new and balanced maritime order taking into account the legitimate interests of all countries and of the international community as a whole must lead to satisfactory solutions. It is not for nothing that its aim is extremely ambitious and was conceived to be universal. The major question of the exploitation of the sea-bed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, conceived as being irrevocably the common heritage of mankind, constitutes a test for that ever more intense international co-operation we seek. In this the great industrialized countries, the lesser industrialized countries and the developing countries must find harmonious formulas which will contribute to a new world economic order.

195. Among the most important questions now under discussion, I should like to refer particularly to a problem that is vital to my country, that of access to the living resources of the exclusive economic zone of other States for men accustomed to fish there in accordance with rights established by history or by custom. Spain has actively participated in the Conference seeking, as it will continue to do, to maintain a formula which will adequately safeguard the rights of all States and the interests of the international community as a whole.

196. Lastly, I wish to mention the importance which my country attaches to the negotiating and peace-keeping role of the United Nations in the international community and the need for all States Members to work for the institutional improvement of the Organization by way of Charter reform.

197. Among other measures, we consider of particular interest the strengthening of the Security Council, the establishment of a permanent system of peace observation and the possibility of establishing a permanent world economic commission within the framework of the Economic and Social Council.

198. My country has this year participated actively in the important tasks of the special committee to review the Charter of the United Nations.²⁵ It attaches great importance to the work of that Committee and hopes that among its proposals will be found a course of action to make the work of this Organization more flexible and its effectiveness greater.

199. Spain will always seek to serve the lofty purposes of this Organization and the Assembly can be sure that we shall never fail to co-operate with it to ensure that the international community, of which this Assembly is the most genuine representation, may make progress and achieve results along the path of peace, understanding and co-operation.

200. We live under the aegis of solidarity. We live united. Let us act united.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

²³ United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata from 14 to 25 March 1977.

²⁴ United Nations Conference on Desertification, held at Nairobi from 29 August to 9 September 1977.

²⁵ Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.