

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records



**16th
PLENARY MEETING**

Monday, 3 October 1977,
at 10.55 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 106: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: report of the Committee on Contributions (<i>continued</i>)	267
Address by Mr. Gaston Thorn, President of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commerce of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	267
Agenda item 9: General debate (<i>continued</i>) Speech by Mr. Sipraseuth (Lao People's Democratic Republic)	271
Speech by Mr. Boutros (Lebanon)	273
Address by Mr. Salem Robaye Ali, Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen	276
Agenda item 9: General debate (<i>continued</i>) Speech by Mr. Jabang (Gambia)	278

President: Mr. Lazar MOJSOV (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEM 106

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: report of the Committee on Contributions (*continued*)*

1. The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that at the 1st plenary meeting on 20 September this year it was announced that two countries were in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. I have now been informed by the Secretary-General that the remittance in the necessary amount has since been paid by Democratic Kampuchea. The Secretary-General's letter will be circulated shortly in document A/32/224/Add.1.

Address by Mr. Gaston Thorn, President of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commerce of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

2. The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will hear a statement by the President of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commerce of Luxembourg and former President of the General Assembly. I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Gaston Thorn and in inviting him to address the General Assembly.

3. Mr. THORN (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, my first words are naturally ad-

dressed to you, Sir, in extending heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of this thirty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

4. The excellent bilateral relations which my country maintains with Yugoslavia have already allowed me on many occasions to appreciate your talents, and the conviction which you bring to the noble task of bringing peoples together. Moreover your presidency once more reminds us of the eminent role being played by your country in world affairs at this time when the meeting to review the Conference on European Security and Co-operation is being held in Belgrade. I wish you, Mr. President, all the perseverance and patience which I know from personal experience you will sometimes need in the coming months.

5. I wish now to extend most sincere thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe. While so many other Presidents of the Assembly, including myself, have made brief ascents to this presidency, he is always, so to speak, President by vocation, because after having brilliantly conducted the debates of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, he assumed, and continues to fill, with admirable competence, the office of President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

6. I should like now once more to assure our Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, of the boundless trust and support of the Government of Luxembourg in his tireless efforts to eliminate hotbeds of tension and conflict threatening international peace and security. I am particularly pleased to see that during his mandate—indeed, his mandates—an increasing number have come to share the views which he has always expressed with courage and lucidity on strictly intergovernmental co-operation, and also on the imperative need to work together in organizations such as the United Nations. It is my most sincere wish that he will be able to continue to gather the fruits of his patient work for the good of humanity.

7. This year again our Organization has taken a major step towards the situation which I believe we all agree to be ideal of absolute universality. Djibouti and Viet Nam are now seated among us. My country sincerely welcomes this development, and extends to the new Members its unreserved co-operation in the search for our common goal—peace and good relations among all peoples.

8. At the time when each year we attempt to take stock of the world situation I had hoped, until the last moment, to be in a position to insert some note of optimism. Unfortunately, I think that once more our expectations and our hopes have been greatly disappointed. And yet the need, the urgent need, to advance towards compromise and

* Resumed from the 1st meeting.

the essential conciliations, is becoming more and more pressing. On the other hand, distinct possibilities for solutions can fortunately be discerned for almost all the dangerous situations. There is therefore still reason for hope, even though the solutions are not yet within our grasp. In spite of the proliferation of international contacts, international tension still exists in the Middle East and southern Africa, and, what seems to me to be worse still, other conflicts have arisen in Africa and other regions of the world.

9. A careful analysis of these tensions shows, on the one hand, how some of them have been with us for a long time and some are largely irrelevant to present-day problems; on the other hand, we see how far we have progressed towards solutions, so that I am led to ask why at this time, in many cases quite suddenly, tension rises up again in a given area of the world, in outbursts of violence and hatred. Who can be benefiting from all this? We should note that in any case it is rarely those who are tearing each other to pieces in battles and ambushes which, far from establishing anyone as victor, usually leave both sides the losers.

10. To all these direct threats to world peace we must add the short-comings of Governments in facing the problems of economic development, and the always numerous violations of human rights, I am forced to ask myself when the world will, finally, learn from its rather inglorious past.

11. Is it not discouraging to see still today—today perhaps more than ever—a quarter of a century after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that these rights are daily violated in many countries? The evidence gathered during the “Prisoners of Conscience Year” of Amnesty International, the testimony of refugees and political exiles, the reports of our ambassadors and our journalists describe a situation where horror is often equalled only by the sufferings of men who have been physically and morally destroyed simply for having dared to think and—if I may be allowed the tautology—to think freely.

12. It is time for our Organization to deal seriously with this problem, not so much in terms of codifying rights as in terms of making sure that they are respected in practice. That is not to interfere in the internal affairs of other States; respect for human rights is not anyone’s special preserve; it is part of the common and inalienable heritage of mankind. It must go far beyond ideologies and group solidarity, for what is at stake here is what is or should be the ultimate aim of all political action, that is to say, man himself and his dignity and freedom, and these, I repeat, are inalienable whether for men living in the East, in Uganda, in Viet Nam, in Chile or in our midst.

13. While the ideological struggle is going on or is even being intensified, when criticism against this or that Government or régime is becoming more and more insistent, when more or less justified accusations are levelled against anything that might even smack of imperialism, how can we not see that that is interference of quite a different kind from that represented by asking our Organization to take a larger and more active part in ensuring each man as many rights and freedoms as possible? For us, I repeat, human rights are not merely one means among others for

achieving the aims of a particular policy. For us, the full and complete achievement of human rights and freedoms, the flourishing of these rights for all without restriction is an end in itself, perhaps the highest goal which a political leader can pursue. To that end, my country is prepared to support any realistic and constructive initiative aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in this area.

14. I have spoken of disappointments, but also of hopes, and that holds true with regard to the question of the Middle East, among others. We find the state of non-belligerency which now prevails in this region is far from satisfactory, and that is why I would make an urgent appeal to the parties concerned not only to resume the peace negotiations but also to accept the extended hand of the great friendly nation of the United States which, under the leadership of its President, is sparing no effort to bring a just and lasting peace to the Middle East to the benefit of all concerned. The solutions tirelessly advocated by President Carter and his Secretary of State, Mr. Vance, are honest and just, and deserve to be accepted. They are, moreover, for the most part in line with the relevant resolutions of our Organization. I would therefore call on all the parties concerned to resume the dialogue without any pre-conditions, and when I say “all the parties concerned” this naturally includes, as I said at this rostrum a number of years ago, the Palestinian people. Now that difficult negotiations are under way, I willingly exercise great caution and I shall therefore not air in public my detailed views on this subject; however, I should like to emphasize that it is just as illusory to wish to deny the existence, the right to a territory with guaranteed boundaries and the right to peaceful development to Israel as it is to deny them to the people of Palestine. On the other hand, territorial conquest on the pretext that it enhances the national security of a people will never make for durable peace, but only perpetuate war and bloody conflicts.

15. And now why waste time in establishing illusory exclusive conditions or to resolve sterile conflicts by resolutions and condemnations. We cannot wait here indefinitely for the last intransigents to overcome the last of their prejudices. It simply must be realized that the Assembly cannot just count the number of supporters on each side but we must find a solution which is acceptable first and foremost to all sides. That is the only way by which the small and medium-sized Powers which form the immense majority of the United Nations, can show that they are not simply pawns in a game, the rules and outcome of which they do not know. On the contrary they can make a real contribution to peace and security which are theirs as well as ours.

16. I now come to another sad chapter in the history of our Organization: I am speaking of the extremely complex problems of southern Africa.

17. Border incidents, bloody clashes and inhuman repressions, alas, continue to dominate the scene in this region. The hopes that we have pinned on a peaceful settlement in Zimbabwe to try to make the minority régime accede to the wishes of the majority, have unfortunately not been achieved. Despite the mounting pressure of world public opinion and in spite of growing opposition and internal armed struggle, the illegal minority Government of

Ian Smith has succeeded in keeping the great majority of the population under the intolerable yoke of colonialism which disregards even the most elementary rights.

18. Rejecting negotiation which might have led to a peaceful transition to a majority régime, the Ian Smith régime is clutching at straws and its obstinacy and perseverance on the path of confrontation will not help at all. Only a negotiated solution can spare the country the greatest sacrifices and utter economic ruin.

19. I should like to pay a tribute to the efforts made by the United Kingdom and the United States in their search for a solution with the help of the United Nations and I appeal to all African countries and to the liberation movements in Zimbabwe to try to support this effort without any exclusive pre-conditions and in a manner which will allow the people concerned to express themselves freely.

20. In South Africa the policy of *apartheid* and that of the bantustans continue to take their toll of victims. These forms of inhuman racism have been of concern to our Organization for many years without any improvement in the fate of the oppressed peoples concerned being detected. This distressing situation persists in spite of repeated resolutions, lengthy conferences and many statements expressing understandable abhorrence at a régime which has cunningly and until now with impunity continued to humiliate and to exploit human beings pitilessly. If we want to see an end to this intolerable situation, words are not enough; actions are required from our Governments and real commitments are needed from all our countries. Only at this cost and the cost of some sacrifices will we be able to succeed in making justice, equity and peace prevail in that part of the world.

21. The countries of the European Community have committed themselves to this policy and my colleague, Mr. Simonet, current President of the Community, has informed the Assembly [7th meeting] of the initiatives our Community has taken and is still envisaging. The code of conduct adopted to control companies and enterprises in South Africa [see A/32/267] is a first step in trying to improve the lot of coloured workers. Other measures being studied now will highlight further our intention and our determination not simply to tolerate passively continuation of the present situation in South Africa.

22. In Lagos a few weeks ago we announced these initiatives and I should like to congratulate those who organized the World Conference for Action against *Apartheid*. Rarely, it seems to me has a meeting convened to discuss such explosive situations been able to do so with so much dignity.

23. While still on the subject of southern African problems, I should like to pay an unreserved tribute to the five countries which, through perseverance and persuasion contributed so greatly to speeding up the development of the situation in Namibia towards independence. This initiative deserves our full support because the sooner some, shall we say, formal hesitations are overcome, the sooner will the Namibians be able to proceed to self-determination. Here again last minute obstacles should not discourage us.

24. Unfortunately, southern Africa is not our only pre-occupation in Africa. The border disputes which have proliferated between African countries have now assumed truly tragic proportions. I do not need to recall here my feelings for the people of this young continent or my personal commitment to their legitimate aspirations. I beg them to cease these fratricidal struggles, whether in Zaire, in West Africa or in the Horn of Africa—these border struggles which are as useless as they are interminable. They do not resolve the real problems. On the contrary, they merely provoke frustration and fan the spirit of revenge which breeds further murderous struggles. And who, may I ask, derives any benefit from all of this?

25. It took, as we all know, our ancient continent of Europe 10 centuries of bloodthirsty fighting and great sacrifices to recognize the pointlessness of all these struggles. We know how terrible these sacrifices were. It is perhaps their belated recognition of this that led our countries, hardly reassured as to their own borders, to consider abolishing them for the greater benefit of their citizens. We have things to learn from our neighbours as well, and what we can give them in experience and co-operation is more fruitful than simply wasting our energies in sterile quarrels.

26. The development, or perhaps we should say the stagnation, of the situation in Cyprus is naturally of great concern. While at the beginning of this year hopes were justified, thanks especially to the efforts made by our Organization, constructive talks between the two communities have not been held for several months.

27. It could be said, and some do say, that there are major reasons for this. Honestly I cannot go along with that because as soon as one looks for major reasons for not acting one finds them. In the meantime the situation deteriorates and solutions become more and more difficult. I personally continue to believe that the crisis in Cyprus and the future of that sovereign State, a fully fledged Member of our Organization, should be quickly resolved in Cyprus by the Cypriots of the two communities under the aegis of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. Following the sudden demise of Archbishop Makarios it is up to his successors and to the leaders of the Turkish community in Cyprus to resume negotiations as soon as possible and to find a solution. No one will gain anything from acrimonious debates either in this forum or in any other expanded forum. Should we not help the new generation of Cypriots—since this is already the second generation—to bury hatred and the mistakes of their forefathers and to build up a land where the two communities can feel that they are Cypriots and are proud to be Cypriots? Our Organization should help in every way both in maintaining peace and in providing humanitarian aid.

28. I should like now to refer to a chapter whose importance and danger to humanity at large I cannot stress too strongly. I wish to speak of the frantic arms race which, far from abating, is gathering ever-increasing momentum.

29. Last year in this Assembly I criticized the disproportion between military budgets—some \$300 billion— and the amount of money devoted to development for the 1,200

million people who live in a poverty no human being should have to endure.

30. What can we say of that today? Today, mention is made of \$350 billion for military expenditure, whereas the number of those who suffer from famine, malnutrition and illiteracy increases from year to year. The developed countries spend 20 times more on military programmes than on development aid. But I must add that developing countries have also been caught up in the momentum of this dangerous frenzy, this fever, for their importation of increasingly sophisticated arms now exceeds a value of \$6 billion.

31. Faced with these figures, which barely give an idea of the destructive potential that is being stockpiled and the terrible magnitude of the poverty which the majority of the world's population has suffered all too long, should we not say that the time has come at last to give up vain words for specific action?

32. Next spring, a special session of the United Nations will be devoted to the burning question of disarmament. This is a very important step forward—I do not dare say, because I dare not believe, towards a definite solution of this question, but at least towards a possible lessening of the threat. We naturally welcome this initiative because it will enable us to define the problem and submit to the judgement of public opinion all its implications, among which its influence on the evolution and development of the whole of humanity is paramount.

33. It is with distress that we raise the question, which is without doubt justified, of whether our Organization—and above all the Members who bear the responsibility—will be able to take up the challenge which has been issued. Resolutions adopted at the special session cannot remain a dead letter; otherwise, the United Nations would run the risk of finding itself here more than elsewhere barred from the exercise of its main role as guarantor of peace.

34. Even before knowing the outcome of the special session devoted to disarmament, some have already launched an appeal for a world conference to deal with the same subject. I ask myself, is their trust in this first initiative, which has not yet even begun, so very limited? Or perhaps they are not ready, as of 1978, to undertake the necessary commitments for the success of this urgent task? Without wishing, *a priori*, to dismiss such a conference, on condition that the nuclear Powers take part in it, I repeat, the postponement of a solution in my view would be tantamount almost to a refusal to halt the arms race and to a scarcely veiled avowal that the improvement of the condition of millions of people is not the first or the most immediate preoccupation of certain Governments.

35. Whether it is a special session of the United Nations or a world conference—its title has or will have nothing to do with its success—the success of the venture will depend not on the speeches but on the willingness to undertake firm commitments and to follow them up by specific action.

36. I have already drawn the attention of this thirty-second session of the General Assembly to the incommensurable gaps which exist between military expenditure and expenditure for the development of our brothers who live in almost complete destitution.

37. The poor, the undernourished, the badly housed and the ill educated are calling to us to free resources which are being used today for destruction, and to devote them to the noble cause of enabling those people to enjoy the riches of this world, so that the expression “human rights” in its widest sense will not remain without meaning for them.

38. What can we say of the world economic situation, the progress towards the so-called new international economic order which should in the final analysis enable all nations and all men to share more equitably in economic arrangements and structures?

39. The world economic situation presents a sombre picture. If inflation and unemployment have not increased again, nevertheless they remain disturbingly high and continue to represent an ominous threat to any progress or economic growth. All of us know today that the absence of economic growth will not further as we should wish the necessary, nay indispensable, effort with regard to development aid.

40. Certainly the results of the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation, called the North-South dialogue, fell short of the hopes and expectations of the developing countries. Although I would not deny this, in the least, I stress nevertheless that this was also the case in regard to the hopes of the so-called developed countries.

41. Despite these disappointments, which I think are practically inevitable, let us continue our dialogue; let us stress the tangible results achieved; and let us seek tirelessly for compromise and for solutions of the problems which remain unsolved, so as to reduce the discrepancy, dangerous to world peace, in the unequal distribution of riches between our countries. The seventh special session, the fourth session of UNCTAD in Nairobi and the Paris Conference have shown us the way to go.

42. Let us renounce confrontation and passionate but sterile rhetoric and let us continue realistic discussion between reasonable people. What is at stake is worthy of patience, and the final results will depend on that. I know that the absence of results from the resumed thirty-first session² does not inspire optimism, but is it not really too much to expect spectacular results of a very short session? I remain an optimist, for my part, because the failure, if failure there was, was in my view chiefly one of facile slogans, “all or nothing” solutions which can never be found and will lead nowhere. It must be remembered that we are committed to a dialogue which should be permanent, which may at times produce euphoria, but which will certainly at others be slow, because in any great human enterprise there will always be crises. Just imagine: more than 150 sovereign States differing in history, culture, level of development and even interests, wish to join together to change the face of the world so as to ensure to everyone prosperity, peace and dignity. We shall not achieve that in 24 hours, or in a year. We shall never achieve it if we simply bludgeon ourselves with verbose resolutions. We shall

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Plenary Meetings*, 1st meeting, para. 7.

² *Ibid.*, 108th and 109th meetings.

perhaps succeed if we allow the vast enterprise of reflection, study and patient research undertaken by Governments in international forums and in this Organization itself time to mature, painfully to reconcile points of view, to raise support for realistic and realizable programmes and to mobilize all the energy possible to hasten the final advent of this new economic order to which we all aspire. In my opinion, that order cannot spring spontaneously from a world conference, but will be produced by a series of specialist conferences prepared and facilitated by negotiations between regional groups.

43. I have not been able to make any deliriously optimistic remarks. Nevertheless, it should not be thought that what I have said either on the persistent and grave threats to peace in the various regions of the world or the short-comings in the development of the economic situation constitutes a reproach addressed to the Organization. I have known for too long that his Organization has merely reflected both the good and the bad will of all its Members, and of their willingness to abide by its Charter, its conventions and its resolutions.

44. I wished simply to express at this rostrum the fears of a small nation which during the course of its history has run the gamut of all the scourges with which we have to deal, and which has resolutely placed all its hope and faith in agreement between the nations which call themselves united. We salute each success with enthusiasm, but I do not think we should waste any more time than that, for many problems and crises remain which require all our attention and effort.

45. For a long time still we shall have to live with failures and with successes, but I am convinced that through them we shall be able to make ever better use of the great possibilities offered by this Organization, which was born from a world which, shocked at the depths of human folly, wished to ensure a better future for humanity.

46. More than 30 years after that great humanitarian venture, once again we are asked to take up the challenge. Our Charter gives us the essential precepts and it is up to us to adapt ourselves to the new requirements of the evolution of our world.

47. It is an exalting task for each of us, that of contributing to world peace and to the material and intellectual well-being of all mankind. If we fail in this duty we shall deserve the worst of condemnation, that of our own children.

48. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commerce of Luxembourg, and former President of the General Assembly, for the important statement he has just made.

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (*continued*)

49. Mr. SIPRASEUTH (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*):³ On behalf of the

³ Mr. Sipraseuth spoke in Lao. The French text of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

Lao People's Democratic Republic, I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all representatives present here.

50. I should like to congratulate Mr. Lazar Mojsov, Deputy Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on his unanimous election to the post of President of the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am convinced that through our united efforts the work of this Assembly session will yield positive results.

51. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate also Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, who was accorded a second term of office by the Assembly at its previous session. It will be my great pleasure to contribute our support and co-operation to the smooth running of our international Organization.

52. I should particularly like to address our greetings and sincere congratulations to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, a country blessed with strong traditions of struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism in the pursuit of peace, national independence, friendship and international co-operation, which has just recovered its legitimate right to United Nations membership. The admission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations is a victory for the Vietnamese people, for the peoples of the world and for the United Nations itself.

53. I also wish to welcome the admission to our international Organization of the Republic of Djibouti.

54. In one year, great changes have occurred in the international situation. Thanks to the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the sixtieth anniversary of which will soon be celebrated, the socialism which was born in a single country and which became a world-wide system after the Second World War, has spread and has been continuously consolidated in all fields. After the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo in 1976, those countries strengthened their solidarity with the struggle against imperialism for the establishment of a new international economic order. The national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, greatly encouraged by the victories in the struggle for national salvation of the peoples of Viet Nam, Democratic Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic against their imperialist aggressors, are swelling further, developing vigorously and winning new victories. In the capitalist countries the class struggle of the workers for democratic freedoms and a better life is daily increasing its scope. Faced with this situation, the imperialists have reacted in a variety of pernicious ways, resorting to fallacious propaganda, to division, to the policy of peaceful evolution and to tactics of intimidation, intervention and aggression aimed at checking the revolution and impeding progress. But they can in no way stem the tide of history. The balance of forces in the world is continuing to tip in favour of the forces of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

55. I am pleased to note that during the past 12 months the Lao People's Democratic Republic, relying on its own strength and benefiting from the support of the United Nations and of friendly countries around the world, has worked tirelessly for national defence and construction.

56. We are fully aware that constructing a new way of life is one of the most difficult, complex and time-consuming tasks. Moreover, we must constantly deal with attempts to undermine us on the part of enemies of the new régime. Nevertheless, while developing the sovereign rights of the Lao people and strengthening its attachment to the new régime, we have been able to achieve significant success in maintaining security and order throughout the country, binding the wounds of war and eliminating the harmful vestiges of the former régime, as well as in restoring the economy, developing our culture and improving the life of the people. We have thus made an active contribution to the defence of peace and the strengthening of friendship and international co-operation. Those are signs of our commitment to peace, independence, friendship, international co-operation and well-being.

57. I wish to take this opportunity to voice my deep gratitude to the United Nations, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Democratic Kampuchea, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the People's Republic of China and other socialist countries, the non-aligned nations, friendly countries and international organizations and peoples throughout the world which prize peace and justice, including the progressive American people, and which, by their aid and support for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, contributed to the victory of the Laotian people.

58. Since its foundation two years ago, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has actively pursued a policy of peace, independence, friendship and non-alignment. From this rostrum I wish once again to reaffirm our position. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is continuing to strengthen its special relations of good-neighbourliness with the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and with Democratic Kampuchea on the basis of long-standing traditions of friendship and of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in a spirit of fraternal co-operation and for our reciprocal advantage.

59. We are convinced that the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam will make an active contribution to the work of the United Nations for the achievement of its objectives.

60. We are convinced also that the international community, too, will make its contribution, in aid and support of all kinds to the reconstruction of Viet Nam, which for decades has suffered so much from the devastating war of aggression.

61. In this regard, we believe that the United States will not fail in its commitment to help to bind up the wounds of war and to assist in Viet Nam's post-war reconstruction.

62. We are committed to the further strengthening of solidarity and friendship with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with the People's Republic of China and with other socialist countries, while stepping up reciprocal aid and mutually advantageous co-operation.

63. We shall continue to strengthen our solidarity with the non-aligned countries in the defence of national independence and the sovereign right of every country over its natural wealth, and for a new international economic order.

64. We stand for the strengthening of peace and the development of relations between countries having different political systems, on the basis of strict respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, of non-interference in others' domestic affairs, of equality and of mutual advantage, and for fruitful international co-operation.

65. As a country of South-East Asia we steadily pursue the policy of developing friendly relations and co-operation of various kinds with the countries of the region on the basis of mutual respect for independence and sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality and mutual advantage, and of not allowing any foreign country to use one's territory as a base for aggression and direct or indirect intervention directed against another country. We are opposed to the presence of the bases and troops of imperialist aggression in this part of the world. At the same time, we energetically support the struggle for the national independence, peace, democracy and true neutrality of the countries of the region.

66. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has always desired good-neighbourly relations with the Kingdom of Thailand on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. However, unfortunately those in power in Thailand follow a policy which is unfriendly to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Despite that, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic will spare no effort to improve Lao-Thai relations in the legitimate interests of the peoples of both countries and of peace in this region of the world.

67. The Lao People's Democratic Republic wishes to establish good relations with the United States of America on the basis of mutual respect for independence and sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and mutual interest. The United States should cease all activities hostile to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and should not shirk its contribution to healing the wounds of war and to the reconstruction of the national economy of post-war Laos.

68. We are in favour of the complete and rapid withdrawal of foreign troops from South Korea and we energetically support the position of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea directed towards the peaceful and independent reunification of Korea.

69. We fully support the just struggle of the Arab and Palestinian people for the recovery of the Arab territories illegally occupied by Israel and for the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to the creation of a Palestinian State. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole true representative of the Palestinian people, must participate on an equal footing and with full rights in all the negotiations for a settlement of the problems of peace in the Middle East.

70. We support the peoples of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia in their struggle against racism and *apartheid*, against imperialist interference and aggression, for national independence, against oppression and exploitation, and for democracy and social progress; and we strongly condemn all the bloody and savage acts of the racist régimes of South

Africa and Rhodesia, and imperialist intervention and aggression.

71. We support the peoples of Mozambique and Angola in their struggle to defend national independence against interference and aggression by imperialists and their reactionary lackeys.

72. We support the struggle of the Cuban people against the pressure and economic blockade brought to bear against it by the United States.

73. We denounce the Fascist junta of Pinochet, which is engaged in bloody repression of the Chilean people, and we energetically support the just struggle of the Chilean people for freedom and democratic rights.

74. We support the peoples of Latin America in their struggle to eliminate the exactions of neo-colonialism, to defend their independence and their sovereignty over their natural resources, and to achieve equitable international relations.

75. We note that the States Members of the United Nations already number 149. However, it is to be regretted that certain member countries still persist in their policy of intimidation, interference and aggression against other countries and that the Governments of certain other countries practice inhuman repression of their own peoples, who are fighting for the right to exist, for democratic freedoms and social progress, and against racism and racial discrimination. But at the same time, in order to camouflage their violation of human rights, the ruling circles in those countries loudly proclaim that they are defending human rights. All this, of course, deceives nobody; on the contrary, every day world opinion denounces those criminal acts more severely.

76. Laos is a small country, of 3.5 million inhabitants, whose age-old backwardness has been made very much worse by decades of devastating imperialist wars of aggression. For these reasons we ardently long to improve the life of our people and make Laos a rich and prosperous country.

77. In the task of national reconstruction, while relying mainly on our own efforts, we hope that we shall receive support, aid and co-operation in various fields from the United Nations and from friendly countries. We are convinced, furthermore, that the General Assembly at its present session will find appropriate means to create an impetus of support and effective aid to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

78. We undertake to do everything possible to make our own active contribution to the work of the United Nations in defending peace, strengthening friendship and encouraging the co-operation and progress of the peoples of the world.

79. In conclusion, I wish great success to the work of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

80. Mr. BOUTROS (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, I am delighted to express to you my

warmest congratulations on your election to preside over the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. The unanimous vote of confidence which brought you to the presidency is evidence of your merits and of your remarkable personal qualities. I am convinced that under your direction the debates of our Assembly will be conducted with all the necessary authority, thanks to your profound knowledge of international relations and your great experience.

81. I also wish to convey my deep appreciation and respect to Mr. Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe, who occupied the presidential Chair during the previous session of the Assembly with the greatest ability. Similarly, I should like to recognize and emphasize the sustained and tireless efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in serving and consolidating world peace.

82. The delegation of Lebanon welcomes into the United Nations two new Members—Viet Nam and Djibouti. Their new presence within the United Nations accords with the principle of universality of our Organization by broadening its foundations and thus facilitating the complete fulfilment of its mission.

83. Before dealing with the questions involved in the general debate, or with the problems of the Middle East, and of Lebanon in particular, I should like to emphasize a fact which to us is very significant. We have come to this session after the peace process has really begun in Lebanon, and we are here to represent as a delegation the profound determination of our country to continue to exist, the unified country of a unified people under the leadership of a freely and constitutionally elected President.

84. Since the preceding session, many events have taken place, near and far, which have given rise to both expectation and concern. We have followed with the greatest interest the development of relations between the great Powers, the North-South dialogue, and the development of the situation in many areas of unrest, such as Africa, Cyprus and the Middle East. We have done so without losing sight of the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons or the close relationship between political security, military security and economic prosperity.

85. This year the agenda includes a large number of items. Lebanon has participated in studies and in discussion of these items at previous sessions of the General Assembly, either in meetings of the specialized agencies or at international conferences sponsored by the United Nations. Since our attitudes on all these items are firm and well known, I see no need to go into details. Suffice it for me to point out here that the positions of Lebanon have always been in conformity with the spirit and letter of the Charter and in harmony with the policy of non-alignment, the needs of the developing countries and the general rules which govern the evolution of the world.

86. Since the founding of the Organization, Lebanon has continuously demonstrated its faith in the guiding principles of the United Nations, its belief in the need for, and usefulness of, international co-operation and its concern for peace based on justice for the good of mankind.

87. If our international community had been able in good time to find appropriate solutions to the dangerous problems which have become items regularly included in our agenda, the world would not have reached its present stage of insecurity, its peoples would not have become more and more separated by their conflicts, and our Organization, in the execution of its role, would probably not have been reduced to a situation that is close to paralysis. If only the United Nations had succeeded in freeing the world of its complexes of fear and injustice, peace would now reign throughout the world. But unfortunately the facts are otherwise, and the responsibility is shared among us.

88. While, therefore, it is inadmissible for us to exonerate anyone in particular from this responsibility, the great Powers, for their part, bear a responsibility proportionate to their enormous potential, let alone the fact that the Charter of the United Nations has entrusted them with a particular role in the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

89. I say this with conviction and yet without bitterness, despite the fact that my country has been one of the victims of the continuation of the crisis in the Middle East.

90. Before taking up the specific problems of Lebanon, I should like to deal with the Middle East crisis, whose echoes have filled the chambers and halls of the United Nations for the past 30 years, and whose repercussions have been particularly tragic for Lebanon.

91. Lebanon has always been in the vanguard of those defending the Palestinian cause. In this respect, its position remains unchanged. It is the same position as that of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations, which is based on the resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly—particularly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. All those resolutions, without exception, condemn the acquisition of the territories by force as illegal; all those resolutions urge Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and recognize in full the rights of the Palestinian people.

92. Furthermore, one of the consequences of the worsening Middle East crisis has been to perturb the economy of the world, particularly through its repercussions on the energy sector. Hence, it has now become impossible to find solutions to the energy crisis without having previously re-established calm and stability in our part of the world.

93. Thus, no matter how much international diplomacy tries to separate the energy crisis from the Middle East question, it cannot ignore this obvious reality.

94. It is high time for the world Organization to help the Palestinian people recover its full rights, particularly the right of self-determination and the right to establish a homeland in Palestine. It is high time to bring about the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967. It is high time for the world Organization to put an end, once and for all, to the violation of international rules and conventions, to Israeli practices in the occupied territories, including the establishment of settlements and the enforcement of Israeli laws upon the citizens of those territories.

95. In this respect, it must be emphasized that the Arab States have adopted, on the Palestinian question, attitudes which derive from their sincere desire to establish, in the Middle East, a lasting peace based on the principles of right and justice, as well as on the resolutions adopted by the United Nations in its various bodies. Should our Organization fail to abide by those principles and to implement its resolutions, we fear that international relations will then be governed by the law of the jungle.

96. For all these reasons, Lebanon supports the efforts made for a just and lasting peace in the region, on the basis of the United Nations resolutions. We also support the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East in a manner which can ensure the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. Lebanon has already expressed its desire to be invited to that Conference, not only in order to assume its responsibilities in the establishment of peace, but also to defend its own rights and interests in each and every question submitted to the Conference, it being clearly understood that the internationally recognized borders of Lebanon are not subject to any discussion whatsoever.

97. Should the United Nations and its various bodies remain in a state of negativism and indifference in the face of the violation of its resolutions, it will continue to create a vicious circle. And the Middle East region would become a fertile ground for successive explosions, which give rise to more dangerous and more extensive confrontations.

98. In all sincerity and seriousness, I must warn this Assembly that the Palestinian problem, in the absence of a just and appropriate solution, will lead to a major conflagration. Lebanon, that small peace-loving country, open to all cultures and peoples, that country unique in the world, through the interaction of the different intellectual, spiritual and human currents within its borders, that country which has always set an outstanding example of harmonious coexistence between creeds and civilizations, that very Lebanon has been, during the past two years, the scene of the most extreme violence.

99. Whatever the direct causes of the bloody events which have taken place in Lebanon and which I shall not go into today, there is no doubt that one of the main elements of the Lebanese tragedy has been created by the delay in finding a just and permanent solution to the Palestinian question. This situation has led to the presence of an excessive number of Palestinians in Lebanon and to a state of unrest caused by the aggravation of the existing contradictions in the Middle East between the different States and their differing policies.

100. The price which Lebanon has paid, as a consequence, is excessive, and we are still bearing a burden beyond our means. The war in Lebanon is, in most respects, the result of a prior injustice committed against a people driven out from its land and deprived of its country. Thus, injustice has itself provoked injustice, and violence has engendered further violence in the host country which is innocent of what befell Palestine.

101. The tolerance which Lebanon has adopted as a standard for its relations with others, and its open attitude

towards ideologies and people, are qualities which seem to have turned against Lebanon itself in a disastrous way, and this has been exacerbated not only by the special structure of Lebanon, but also by an abuse of its liberal system.

102. There were Lebanese who believed, when the fighting was taking place on their land, that the world had abandoned them and the values they represented until the day when the Syrian Arab Republic, acting as a brotherly loyal neighbour, took the initiative of intervening at the darkest moment of our struggle, an initiative which was later supported by a number of our brethren Arab countries, to be subsequently endorsed by the Arab community at the summit meetings in Riyadh⁴ and Cairo.⁵ Thanks to the measures taken following those conferences, Lebanon was able to make progress towards recovering its own security and its well-being. However, Lebanon is still convalescing, for it continues to confront the complex problems of its own reconstruction, together with the challenges, the aggressions and the various attempts at exploitation which expose southern Lebanon and the entire region to enormous dangers.

103. Some people are happy to soothe their consciences by wishing to believe that the war, the destruction, the forced migration and the sufferings experienced by southern Lebanon are the inevitable results of the Middle East crisis, and hence they continue to neglect the adoption of the measures necessary to bring justice to this part of Lebanon. To them we say that Lebanon rejects their logic, that it refuses to continue to suffer, to accept what is happening in southern Lebanon, and to be subjected to the inevitable clashes that this solution generates, pending a solution of the Middle East question.

104. Although the Lebanese are fully aware of the effects of the Palestinian question and of its repercussions on the tragedy of southern Lebanon and on the Lebanese crisis in general, they cannot accept that Lebanon alone should bear the burden of the consequences, of the hesitations and evasions which prevent a solution of the Middle East and thus become the only arena of conflict in the region compelled to pay for the mistakes made by others.

105. The painful events taking place in southern Lebanon constitute a danger that threatens the region and perhaps the whole world. Aware of the multiple dimensions of the tragedy of southern Lebanon and of the suffering endured by our fellow countrymen there, the Lebanese authorities are sparing no effort to find a solution by any possible means. Taking this aim as a starting-point, the Lebanese authorities have drawn up, with the help of Syria, at the Chtaura meeting,⁶ a programme to implement the decisions taken at the Riyadh and Cairo summit conferences. Thus, we are striving to create a climate favourable to the prompt

application of these decisions in the south, and to the restoration of peace to this Lebanese land, especially now that, as you know, the fighting has stopped.

106. In this respect, Lebanon is counting on the support it has found with friends who have responded to its appeals throughout the world. In spite of the difficulties in the way of this approach, we firmly hope that during this delicate phase of spirit of peace, good will, self-restraint and wisdom will prevail so that security will again be definitively restored in the south and the prevailing causes of and anxiety will be eliminated.

107. Furthermore, the Assembly is undoubtedly aware of the heavy consequences of the burden that Lebanon now bears as a result of the ordeal it has undergone. Consequently, Lebanon appeals to the international community, and to your Organization in particular, for increasing material and moral support so that we can resume Lebanon's human and cultural role in the world. At this time, I should like to express my appreciation and my deepest thanks to brotherly and friendly countries which have shown us their sympathy and continue to do so throughout the present critical stage of rebuilding our institutions. I wish to stress in particular the efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, whom we were happy to receive in Lebanon. We availed ourselves of that opportunity to express to Mr. Waldheim our gratitude for his interest, his concern and his assistance. I also wish to commend the efforts made by the United Nations, whether through its various organs and their related programmes, or through experts sent by the specialized agencies and now working in Lebanon. I should also like to convey my most sincere thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross which, in the most difficult circumstances, has discharged its deeply appreciated humanitarian task.

108. The establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is absolutely vital. For this reason, we urge the United Nations to fulfil its obligations under the Charter.

109. In this context, Lebanon is determined to defend its sovereignty, its independence and its territorial integrity against any aggression and to demand respect for its rights by all means, especially for its exclusive right to raise any issue that may concern its territory, its problems or its citizens.

110. To all those who have thought or still think they can exploit the differences in Lebanon and the contradictions in the Middle East, we say that our country is resolved to live in peace, within a framework similar to that within which it lived before the recent events, a framework within which our people can live again in peace, understanding and harmony. Similarly, Lebanon is resolved to prevent any interference in its own affairs and to assume to the best of its ability its mission in the Arab world and in the world at large.

111. The sufferings which the people of Lebanon have endured make it more eager for justice and equity, not only with respect to its own cause, but with respect to any other cause that is just.

112. The gamble on peace or war in the Middle East is one on which will depend not only the political and economic

⁴ Meeting of Heads of State of Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in Riyadh on 17 and 18 October 1976.

⁵ Meeting of Kings and Presidents of the League of Arab States, held in Cairo on 25 and 26 October 1976.

⁶ Meeting of representatives of Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Palestine Liberation Organization, held at Chtaura, Lebanon, from 21 to 25 July 1977.

equilibrium of the world, but also the fate of present and future generations. This is a fact of which, we believe, responsible leaders are not unaware.

113. The country which I represent is located, as you know, in a region of the world where the main currents of the history of man have sprung up, clashed and merged. My country has known great civilizations; it has also witnessed the decline of many others. Wherever one digs into the earth of Lebanon, there are revealed successive ruins of cities, temples and monuments which were erected as a testimony to the continuous renewal of human society in our land.

114. Lebanon has therefore remained true to itself, witnessing from its mountains and shores this unique panorama of history through thousands of years. From this perspective it has derived its spirit, its civilization and its heritage which have formed the essence of its mission. Thus Lebanon has become in its turn a centre of civilization and of intellectual as well as material exchanges which have enabled us to establish with other nations and countries the closest of ties and a profound commitment to the ideals of free communication between countries and peoples at large.

115. Thus, our history has taught us that life is stronger than death, that coming together is better than drawing apart, and that truth triumphs over falsehood. It has also taught us that man will ultimately succeed in overcoming difficulties, however enormous they may be, provided he is inspired by faith, trust and sincerity.

116. In conclusion, let me express the hope that my faith in the future of my country and in its perennial character will find its response in the faith which each one of you has in his own home land. I also hope that my faith in the wisdom of this Organization and its spirit of justice will enable us all together to work for a better future for our countries and mankind.

Address by Mr. Salem Robaye Ali, Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

117. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will hear this morning a statement by the Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Salem Robaye Ali, Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to the United Nations and to invite him to address the Assembly.

118. Mr. ALI (Democratic Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. It is a well-deserved tribute to you, as an eminent statesman, and to your country, Yugoslavia, and its leading role in the non-aligned movement. I should also like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, who guided the work of the previous session of the General Assembly with distinction.

119. It is also with pleasure that I welcome the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, whose admission to this world Organization has been a great achievement for the liberation movement in the world as well as a victory for the forces of peace and progress. Likewise, I welcome the sisterly independent Republic of Djibouti and salute its people, who are determined to preserve their freedom and sovereignty.

120. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the independence of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. For 129 years our country was subjected to colonial rule, with its capital, Aden—an important and strategic site—a military base in the service of imperialism. The policy of partition was implemented in its countryside, which was fragmented into 23 sultanates, emirates and skeikhdoms, to ensure the perpetuation and domination of the colonialist rulers. Today, as our people celebrate this auspicious occasion, we solemnly remember and salute all those heroes who sacrificed their lives for the independence of their country, for its freedom and its progress. We also salute all those friends who extended to us the necessary support and solidarity and stood by our people in their struggle until final victory was achieved.

121. Needless to say, political independence is not an end in itself, for the manifestations of colonialism are many—its soldiers, its education, its culture, its economic relations and its political philosophy. Genuine independence is not, therefore, just a flag and a national anthem. Rather it should initiate radical changes in order to secure a better quality of life for the people in all respects. In our country, independence was only the first step. With our homeland divided and fragmented, our economy a shambles and our people languishing in the abyss of poverty, we had but one choice, namely, a total revolution against all the manifestations of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

122. Thus, we established a national democratic system of government responsive to the wishes and interests of our people, who had long suffered under the yoke of colonialism, feudalism and capitalism. We emerged into political life faced with a rudimentary rural economy, and we worked towards development and progress. We are today well on the way to genuine development. The revolutionary process of economic development thus began with the complete restructuring of the State. Nationalization of the main institutions of the economy, together with the promulgation of the Land Reform Law, brought into prominence the public sector, which now plays a leading role in our economic life. A three-year development plan, completed in 1972, and a five-year plan, now in its final phase, have laid the basis for a modern economic infrastructure. A total change in the ownership of the means of production, carried out mainly by popular uprisings sanctioned by the National Front, propelled our economic development and motivated the masses of workers, peasants and fishermen to undertake voluntary work—a phenomenon that is becoming part of our revolutionary tradition. Today we are faced not with unemployment but with a shortage of manpower.

123. On the social level, a new family law provided for equal political, social and economic rights without regard to sex. A mass movement for the eradication of illiteracy is

now well under way, and before the end of this decade illiteracy will have been completely eradicated in Democratic Yemen. Formal education, which was previously tailored to serve a cosmopolitan service economy, is now geared to the development needs of the country. Our national culture and traditions, which were suppressed by colonial culture, are now being revitalized. Despite our economic problems, we have instituted programmes for free education at all levels and free medication and hospitalization as well as a social welfare programme.

124. Since its establishment in 1963, the National Front led the national struggle against colonialism under the banner of independence, unity and progress. It was natural, therefore, that one of the first decrees of our revolution was the unification of the 23 political entities into six provinces of geographic rather than tribal lines. In 1975, an historic event took place when the National Front merged with the other two national parties to form the United Political Organization—the National Front.

125. Today, we are determined to achieve Yemeni unity, for it is a strategic and noble goal to which the Yemeni people is deeply committed. To that end we are striving, together with our brethren in the north, to undertake the appropriate measures to pave the way towards unity.

126. The persistence of colonialism is in flagrant conflict with the desires manifested by the majority of peoples for the achievement of international peace and security. What has been achieved up to now in the field of détente and international relations is a source of inspiration instilling in us a sense of optimism. Yet, the persistence of certain hotbeds of tension continues to pose a direct threat to world peace.

127. International peace is indivisible, and peace without justice is unendurable. The situation in the Middle East is alarming, to say the least. Ten years after the Israeli aggression against the Arab peoples in 1967, Israel has not withdrawn from the occupied territories. Israel stubbornly continues to follow a policy of refusing to withdraw from the occupied territories. It is pursuing a policy of expansion and annexation and is establishing new settlements in the occupied territories, in utter disregard of the international community and the United Nations. Israel, acting in accordance with its Zionist and racist character, could not even be checked by its closest ally, the United States of America.

128. Likewise, the Palestinian problem, which is at the core of the Middle East problem, continues to be unresolved. Today, three decades after the usurpation of Palestine, Israel is denying the Palestinians not only their homes and homeland but also their inalienable right to self-determination and statehood.

129. How can we then reasonably expect a peaceful solution to be achieved when Israel is proving to the world it is neither prepared nor willing to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories or to recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinian people; and when the United States, which is now posing as an arbiter and intermediary in the Middle East conflict, is hesitant to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the

Palestinian people, a fact which has been overwhelmingly recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

130. It is high time that the United Nations asserts its will by forcing Israel to abide by its resolutions, and notably General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 1974, which clearly called for the self-determination of the Palestinian people in Palestine. We are in full solidarity with the just and legitimate struggle of that people and we fully support the Palestine Liberation Organization in its unrelenting struggle for self-determination and statehood.

131. This session of the General Assembly will focus a great deal of its attention on Africa, a continent which has long been a target for the colonialist and imperialist Powers. An imperialist conspiracy is unfolding which is bent on making Africa another sphere of conflict so as to prevent its people from whole-heartedly pursuing their heroic struggle for independence, sovereignty, and social progress. We are fully convinced that the heroic peoples of Africa realize the new aims of these imperialist and racist plans and will work together to strengthen their solidarity against the common dangers confronting them. For it is actually in the interest of these peoples to co-exist in harmony, to resolve their differences by peaceful means, and to channel their resources into reconstruction and development.

132. In southern Africa, the long and arduous struggle of the African people is beginning to bear fruit. The rebel minority régime in Rhodesia is tottering; Namibia is on the verge of drastic changes; and the *apartheid* régime in South Africa is deeply shaken by popular revolt. No delaying tactics can prevent the African peoples from achieving full independence. We salute the heroic struggle of these peoples and call on everyone to support it unreservedly.

133. We have consistently and on many occasions stated our firm stand with regard to those issues which occupy world attention. We believe that there still is the danger that what has happened in Cyprus can happen to another small State or people. We have always called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and bases from Cyprus and for the full respect of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and its membership in the non-aligned group. We have called for the unconditional withdrawal of all foreign forces from South Korea so that unity can be achieved by peaceful means and a unified Korea may be admitted to the United Nations. Likewise, we have called for the total independence of Puerto Rico, which is now in the grip of imperialism.

134. As a coastal State of the Indian Ocean, we fully subscribe to the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and support the initiative for holding a conference for that purpose. In this respect, we also attach great importance to the maintenance of the Red Sea as a zone of peace and security. The territorial sovereignty of its coastal States should be guaranteed, while its resources should be exploited for the benefit of their peoples. We have always maintained that the security of the coastal and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean is endangered not only by foreign military bases on the islands, such as the American base in Diego García, but also by the foreign military bases on the coastal or hinterland States themselves. Moreover, the expansionist ambitions of certain States, and their

military intervention in the affairs of others, pose no less a threat to the peace of the area. A case in point is Oman, where foreign troops are interfering in the internal affairs of that country and make every effort to obstruct the self-determination of the people of Oman. We condemn all military interventions, and we consider that a political régime sustained by foreign troops and bases lacks the very essence of legitimacy. We reaffirm our total support of the struggle of the Omani people, waged for more than 10 years, for real independence and autonomy under the leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.

135. On the level of world economic relations, we note the important role which the United Nations plays in the establishment of a new international economic order, based on equality, justice and interdependence. The sixth and seventh special sessions, together with the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, have paved the way for the realization of this new system and for putting an end to the existing inequitable modes of economic relations, which served the interests of the capitalist market at the expense of the peoples of the developing countries. While the institution of colonialism is in the process of disappearing, neo-colonialism, with its multiple disguises and varied methods, not only widens the gap between the capitalist countries and the developing countries, but also poses a threat to world peace and security.

136. Unfortunately, the results of the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation were a great disappointment to the developing countries. The capitalist countries must show the necessary political will and carry out practical measures to strengthen international co-operation, while the developing countries must continue to shoulder their responsibilities to cement their solidarity and formulate national policies to bring about the radical changes needed for their social and economic development.

137. It goes without saying that their co-operation and relationship with the socialist States would contribute toward achieving their political independence, ending the exactions of transnational corporations.

138. The United Nations, in its thirty-second year of existence, has co-operated greatly in solving international problems. It has sometimes failed to find the necessary solutions, but this is because certain Member States have not acted in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The strengthening of the role of the United Nations depends on the implementation by its Members of the resolutions of the General Assembly.

139. I would like to pay a tribute to the persistent efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for world peace and security.

140. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen once again reaffirms its firm support of the United Nations and its commitment to its ideals and principles.

141. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank His Excellency the Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen for the important statement he has just made.

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (*continued*)

142. Mr. JABANG (Gambia): Mr. President, I should like to begin by congratulating you on your overwhelming election to preside over this Assembly. The Gambian delegation has no doubt that under your able and wise guidance the deliberations of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly will be both smooth and fruitful. This is because you bring to the presidency of our Assembly so much experience gained through a long and distinguished career in the service of your country and the international community.

143. Through you, Sir, I should also like to extend warm congratulations to all members of the new General Committee of the Assembly and all officers of its Main Committees. We wish all of them every success in their efforts to lead us towards meaningful decisions during the coming weeks. In this respect the full co-operation of the Gambian delegation can always be counted upon.

144. This is in keeping with the seriousness of Gambia and the high regard in which it holds the world Organization. This is especially so because we are one of the smallest States Members of the Organization in terms of both physical size and population. It can also be said that in economic terms we are one of the weakest countries in the world. A gathering of countries such as the United Nations, which, purely on the basis of our humanity, accords us rights, obligations and opportunities equal to those of other countries, big and small, and where we can meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest is in fact something vital to us.

145. That is why we cannot overemphasize the importance we attach to the structure of the Organization. This structure must be seen to reflect and to be geared towards meeting the needs of the generality of the membership. The large majority of States Members of our Organization are developing countries—that is to say, they are the centres of deprivation, disease and illiteracy. None of these evils is the direct result of the activities or inactivities of any country or group of countries alone. The existence of these evils has been and remains the direct responsibility of all of us through our individual and collective behaviour. The Organization which brings all of us together in order to discuss, plan and execute together is therefore the most suitable vehicle for making up for our mistakes and our inadequacies.

146. But we in Gambia believe that the structure of the world Organization itself has a number of serious inadequacies for the purpose which it should serve. We also believe that this Assembly is obliged to amend those inadequacies.

147. My delegation considers that the General Assembly should pronounce itself on whether or not the United Nations is indeed a gathering of equals. If, as we would sincerely wish, it is decided that all Members are equal both in the spirit and in the letter of our Charter, then we submit that in a gathering of equals there is no justification for the existence of a permanent inner circle of a few Members

with the power to approve or disapprove of decisions by the vast majority of the Members.

148. The arguments which were formulated when the five permanent members of the Security Council were so designated now belong to history. They have been superseded by the more urgent, more fundamental, more widespread and more persistent human problems of hunger, malnutrition, insufficient health facilities and, in general, a deeper and wider division of the world between the "haves" and the "have-nots".

149. We frequently remind ourselves that one of the cardinal purposes of the United Nations is to prevent war and to maintain peace throughout the world. But how many wars and breaches of the international peace have we unfortunately experienced since the birth of the Organization? What corner of the world can claim an uninterrupted period of real peace since 1945?

150. It is the belief of the Gambian delegation that, as of 1977, we have more than enough evidence that the United Nations is either not addressing itself adequately to the need to secure and maintain peace in the world or not going about the problem in an appropriate manner. We have over the past 30 years suffered wars and breaches of the peace in all regions of the world, and we shall continue to do so until our Organization gears itself to tackling the root-causes of war and of breaches of the peace.

151. Experts in warfare and sociology will confirm that the absence of war does not mean the presence of peace. In addition to non-belligerency, peace carries with it that ease of mind that only comes to someone living in good health, under adequate and dignified shelter, someone who does not worry about where or when he will have his next full and balanced meal, someone who, in general, is able to live with and relate to all his fellow men on equal terms in every respect.

152. That is the kind of peace that should be the first goal of the United Nations; not a fire-brigade type of peace. To achieve the former quality of peace the Organization will have to consider making the membership of a body such as the Security Council reflect, considerably more than it does now, the desired aims of the world body. The sessions of the General Assembly should place increased emphasis on economic and social matters rather than delegate these exclusively to subsidiaries like UNCTAD and the Economic and Social Council. In short, our present values must be reversed. Economic, development and social problems such as the environment must supersede political problems. Instead of politicizing economic problems let us economize political problems.

153. This would be the first stage towards making the United Nations more practical. The next stage would be a decision to improve our follow-up machinery. Resolutions must not just remain pious. Once adopted the machinery should be competent and willing to implement them. In turn the General Assembly should become a more insistent watchdog over the implementation of its resolutions. It should begin doing this by a regular and frank annual assessment of the executive capacity of the various organs of the United Nations. Praise and honour would be

accorded to the meritorious and improvements made in defaulting organs.

154. This way, we feel, our Organization will begin to get its priorities correct, and become more meaningful to the millions of ordinary men and women all over the world whose fate is a determinant to whether we live in peace or not.

155. It is in the foregoing light that we view with satisfaction the holding, only a week or two ago, in Nairobi, of the first United Nations Conference on Desertification. Desertification is a major source of concern to the people of the Gambia.

156. We are a strong, courageous, hard-working and friendly people. We have a realistic and stable Government that is dedicated to the improvement of the quality of life in the country. By this combination between the people and their Government, we have been able to baffle those prophets of doom who, when we became independent and sovereign some 12 years ago, predicted to the rest of the world that the Gambia was not a viable proposition as an independent State.

157. Resolutely and without fuss, both the Government and people, under the wise and judicious leadership of our Head of State, Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, have embarked upon the task of nation-building—not to prove any point of anybody, but to regain our lost heritages of dignity, equality and self-reliance.

158. By the time we celebrated our first 10 years of nationhood, our achievements had brought us to the forefront among the world's most free, proud and self-respecting peoples.

159. Our economy was buoyant. As an agricultural country the turnover of our principal crops had risen by over 100 per cent. Crop diversification was successfully introduced and new areas of economic activity were initiated. Consequently, today our domestic economy continues to be encouraging. Our gross domestic product at current market prices showed an increase of more than 21 per cent this year over 1975-1976. In 1975-1976 there was a rise under the same headings of more than 19 per cent over those of 1974-1975. That year in turn showed a rise of over 12 per cent on the previous year. At the same time the inflation rate over the same period was considerably lower than the preceding two years. Our real rate of economic growth in 1976-1977 was therefore much higher than in the preceding years.

160. I make reference to our achievements to underscore two points. The first is that, unhindered by an inequitable world economic relationship and by natural phenomena, developing countries, large or small, are capable of pulling themselves up by their own boot-straps and tackling their own problems successfully.

161. My second point is more immediate and more urgent to my country and people. All our achievements, which my colleagues will permit me to consider as impressive, stand to be whittled away by a drought which, for the second time in less than 10 years, prevails over the length and breadth of the Gambia this year.

162. As of now, when we have barely three to four weeks to the end of our rainy season, the total amount of rainfall so far varies from less than a third to less than a half of the seasonal average in large areas of the country. Already entire crops have been lost in some of these areas, and in other areas crop losses will range between 40 per cent and 60 per cent.

163. Many of our friends in the international community have been informed of this catastrophe. I am pleased to acknowledge the good deal of assistance already received from a number of quarters. The anxiety in the Gambia over the drought situation cannot be over-emphasized. We are especially worried that we may be once more on the threshold of a second spell of drought lasting for years rather than months or weeks. The situation today is disturbingly similar to that of the same period in 1968. As everybody knows, that was the onset of the five years of catastrophic drought in the Sahel which took the lives of millions of human beings, livestock, and vegetation in that region of West Africa.

164. By the time that dark period ended in 1973-1974, coupled with the world economic crisis of the same period, the Gambian economy, having made a magnificent start, was hanging in the balance. From a foreign reserves position worth about 14 months' of imports at the outset, our reserves fell to below four months' worth of imports by the end of 1974.

165. We hope and pray to Allah the Merciful and Beneficent that we are not on the threshold of a similar experience. We would also like to feel sure that humanity is one and indivisible, and that our friends individually and in the international community will come forward unhesitatingly and join us in facing an emergency situation. In this regard, I should like to place particular emphasis on the long-term needs for combating the effects of drought and preventing future droughts.

166. Let me hasten to observe that in the past, developed countries provided emergency aid to developing countries at the expense of their normal aid allocation for non-emergency purposes. When we appeal here for aid to fight an emergency situation we do so with the hope and expectation that such aid, when forthcoming, will not be a deduction from the aid packages already earmarked for us before our emergency. Such aid measures would not only be insufficient for our over-all needs, they would run high risks of being counter-productive and leaving us in more troubled waters than they found us. Emergency aid must be what it literally means. It must come from fresh, unforeseen efforts and must complement, rather than replace, planned and calculated aid.

167. I am glad to say that at the regional level the Sahel countries are already at a high level of co-ordination and mobilization in the fight against desertification and drought. Under the aegis of our permanent organization—the Permanent Inter-state Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel—the eight member countries hold regular meetings at the ministerial and heads of State levels to co-ordinate action against our common plight. It is gratifying to note the participation and full involvement of the United Nations Sahelian Office and the Club des Amis du

Sahel in our endeavours. It is true to say that what we have achieved so far is very much due to the collaboration of these two bodies and to other generous and dedicated international agencies.

168. Gambia is particularly pleased and honoured that the ministerial and summit meetings of the Sahelian countries will be held in its capital, Banjul, early in December this year, and my Head of State has given me the mandate to extend our heartfelt invitation to all international agencies and organizations which are preoccupied with the improvement of the quality of life in the world to attend the Banjul meetings. The ministerial meeting will be from 8 to 10 December and the summit will be on 12 and 13 December.

169. In Gambia we believe firmly in the principle and the practice of human rights and dignity. That is why we always place ourselves on the side of every people fighting against foreign domination, oppression based upon any form of racial or class distinction, and any form of dictatorship of a given minority over a given majority.

170. Gambia, like most other countries represented in this Assembly, was under foreign rule for a number of centuries. Throughout the dark period of our history, our people were deprived of the most basic forms of human rights. They had no say in choosing their rulers or in deciding how they should be ruled. They were obliged to abandon their culture and to assimilate foreign culture. They had no freedom of movement or assembly, nor any freedom of speech.

171. It is the view of our Head of State, Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, that once freed from such a long period of countless forms of indignities, the least our people deserves is an unhindered opportunity to live a free, dignified and secure life.

172. It is our view that widespread lip-service is paid to the issue of human rights but very little real practical effort goes towards achieving these rights.

173. If, for example, the Western Powers were really committed to changing the odious system of *apartheid* in South Africa, it is the view of my delegation that the system could not have survived all the pious resolutions and calls for its abrogation in this Assembly and in other international forums. Instead we see the South African régime going from strength to strength to the point of becoming a nuclear Power.

174. That, of course, is thanks to the active and far-reaching economic, military and political collaboration of major Western countries. To us, the message is clear. For the sake of amassing profits from slave labour, those Western Powers are willing to encourage and finance investments in the South African economy. They go even further than that by giving extensive military and political assistance and backing to ensure the stability of the *apartheid* system. To those countries material gains such as a healthy balance of payments and a buoyant economy take precedence over the freedom and dignity of man. Those Powers sustain and dominate the South African economy. Yet they turn round and join those of us who

make sincere efforts and protestations against the racist régime—purely on the basis of our respect for the dignity of man and the sanctity of his life.

175. The issue of human rights is a composite one. The existence of those rights is not represented by the mere absence of political prisoners or of government by decree. In our view an individual's rights as a human being extend far beyond and go much deeper than those. An individual who enjoys his full human rights is not hungry or thirsty in the midst of plenty. He does not eat or drink from the left-overs of others. He has the right to decent and adequate health and education facilities, and clothing. He has sovereignty over the fruits of his labours and over the natural resources of his motherland. He looks upon other people with the same amount of equality and respect as they do upon him.

176. Those are prerequisites of human rights, which transcend national and international boundaries. They are by no means easy to attain. But they form the core of man's wish and will to live. Life cannot be meaningful without them. So we are all obliged to make human rights our major pursuit in life. Let us first achieve universal human rights and everything else will be added unto us.

177. As I said earlier, our concern in the Gambia for human rights makes us rally to the side of all peoples fighting to free themselves from any form of foreign, racist and unjust oppression. My country, therefore, never ceases to condemn the illegal régime of Ian Smith in Zimbabwe, the South African occupation of Namibia, the Zionist occupation of African and Arab territories in the Middle East, and the French occupation of the Comorian island of Mayotte.

178. Bolstered by Western economic interests and by white racists, the Smith régime has defied international condemnation for over a decade. During that period it has continued to receive its fair share of world trade and essential commodities. Its agents have travelled freely and openly all over the world. Communications between that régime and the outside world have remained unhindered. All this, in a country against which every member of our Organization professes to be applying sanctions. The Gambian delegation is convinced that we are not living up to our solemn declarations. If we kept our word, it is inconceivable that a fledgling clique such as that in Salisbury could continue to prosper against our joint wish and will. This is why Gambia, and indeed all other African countries, have come to the conclusion that an armed struggle is the only sure means of crushing the rebels in Zimbabwe.

179. We have reached this conclusion with a sense of regret and a certain amount of sadness. That is because we, like all our African brothers, would very much have preferred a peaceful solution. We regard any life lost in the present liberation struggle, be it that of a black or that of a white Zimbabwean, as a great and almost irreparable loss of human resources for the future nation. The march of history cannot be halted and the end is clear. Zimbabwe will soon be under black majority rule, come what may. Why, then, must the lives of its young, strong and healthy citizens be wasted?

180. Those are the feelings and questions which make us willing to continue searching for a peaceful settlement in a parallel effort to the armed struggle. That is also the reason why we feel that the latest Anglo-American proposals for a peaceful settlement deserve to be taken seriously and given a chance.

181. My delegation sincerely hopes that it does not have to come to the same conclusion on Namibia. At the twenty-first session in 1966 this Assembly decided to terminate South Africa's Mandate over the Territory [*resolution 2145 (XXI)*]. This was in accordance with the opinion given by the International Court of Justice.⁷ The following year, during the fifth special session the United Nations Council for Namibia was established to administer the Territory and prepare it for independence.

182. Yet what do we have today? We are still negotiating with the South African racists on the timing and manner of independence for the Territory. Meanwhile the Namibians, ironically through a considered decision inherited by the General Assembly, continue to be oppressed and exploited by the most opprobrious political and social system that ever was, and the régime in Pretoria continues to carry the Territory along a predetermined path to assimilation into the *apartheid* set-up.

183. Faced with this situation and encouraged by the spontaneous rallying of the entire Namibian population to the call of the South West African People's Organization for immediate and complete independence, my delegation might well come to feel that there is no alternative to armed struggle. We shall adopt that position for the simple reason that that people's human rights cannot continue to be a subject of negotiations and a matter of give and take.

184. My Government's position on the French occupation of the Comorian island of Mayotte is well known. France likes the world to believe that it is a champion of democracy. But whereas democracy respects and accommodates the wishes of the minority, it proceeds on the basis of the wishes of the majority. France's presence in Mayotte is a complete negation of this basic principle of democracy. When France was the colonial Power over the Territory, it administered it as a single colony. Therefore, France cannot now pretend to any rights or duties to dismember the Territory on the basis of pockets of "Yes" and "No" votes.

185. The Republic of the Comoros is unitary and indivisible. For a country of France's standing in world affairs and in the so-called free world to claim otherwise is to lower its international credibility.

186. As I said earlier, the Gambian Government is opposed to all forms of occupation or acquisition by force of any territory, and when it involves the territory of an African or friendly State, we are that much more opposed to the act. This is why we will not cease to denounce Zionist aggression in the Middle East until Israel withdraws from every inch of territory it has occupied during and since the 1967 war. The arguments used in creating the

⁷ *South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6.*

State of Israel are familiar to us all. That is why we find still less acceptable the present seizure of Arab and African territories on the basis of a supposed need for a national home—unless, of course, one would have us believe that Jews need a national home more than Palestinians. That, indeed, is the clear implication. And until Israel vacates all occupied territory and until our Palestinian brothers have a secure and adequate national home in the birthplace of their ancestors, we shall continue to regard Zionism as racism and to speak against the régime in Tel Aviv. In this respect, we have committed our unreserved support, morally, politically and materially, to our Arab brothers in their struggle for their birthright against international Zionism and its mentors.

187. It is with some sadness that I have to make reference to the divided land of Korea. For too long now, the people of Korea, sharing the same culture, the same history, the same language and, in some cases, even the same ancestors, have suffered an artificial demarcation that divides them from one another. This is contrary to their wishes and

aspirations. Left to themselves alone, it is obvious that they would have solved their family problems internally and peacefully and would have reunified their country by now. The Gambian delegation would like to see all foreign interests stand aside and leave the Korean people alone to solve their own internal problems.

188. The Korean nation is an intelligent and purposeful one. If in working out their differences the Korean people decide that they need the assistance of an outside agent, we are sure they will not fail to appeal to the right quarters for such assistance. We believe that the most appropriate source of such assistance would be the United Nations. We are also convinced that the world body would not shirk its responsibilities if it were approached for any assistance in reunifying this divided people, and would thereby contribute immensely to the warding off of a constant threat to world peace.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.