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4. We shall now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The report of the Fifth Committee on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/32/274. I would remind representatives that the draft resolution was adopted in the Second Committee without a vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 32/3).

5. The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak at this stage.

6. Mr. WHALEN (United States of America): My delegation wishes to state that we do not participate in this consensus, for the same reasons as those we explained at the Second Committee's 6th meeting, held on 6 October.

7. Mr. DINH BA THI (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I should like to express our most sincere gratitude to all representatives in the General Assembly who have been good enough to express their sympathy for our people on the occasion of our admission as a Member of the United Nations. That unanimous manifestation of friendship and the solidarity of the international community with our people, like the adoption by this Assembly of the draft resolution in document A/32/265, on assistance for the reconstruction of Viet Nam, is a great encouragement to our people in their heroic efforts to rebuild the country and ensure for themselves a better life after a war which has been recognized as being the most devastating since the Second World War.

8. I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries and its Chairman, Mr. Fonseka, for the efforts they have made to ensure the adoption of this resolution.

9. We are also sincerely grateful to all friendly countries that sponsored this draft resolution. Once again I should like to reiterate our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for his unflagging endeavours to promote international assistance for the reconstruction of Viet Nam and his invaluable contribution towards the adoption of this resolution. We are convinced that he will devote particular attention to ensuring its implementation.

10. The people and Government of Viet Nam, both during the years of war and during the period of post-war reconstruction, have followed a consistent policy of self-reliance. At the same time, we properly appreciate the importance of international aid, which constitutes a posi-

President: Mr. Lazar MOJSOV (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

**REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (PART I)
(A/32/265)**

1. Mr. DHARAT (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: I have the honour to present part I of the report of the Second Committee on item 12 [A/32/265].

2. In paragraph 6 of its report, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Assistance for the reconstruction of Viet Nam", which was adopted by the Committee without a vote. Statements in connexion with the draft resolution were made by the representatives of Cuba, the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Mali, Norway, who also spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries, Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Malaysia, Viet Nam and the United States of America at the 6th meeting of the Second Committee, held on 6 October 1977.

Pursuant to rule 66 of the rules of procedure it was decided not to discuss the report of the Second Committee.

3. The PRESIDENT: The positions of delegations with respect to the draft resolution recommended in paragraph 6 of the report of the Second Committee to the Assembly are reflected in the relevant summary records of the Second Committee.

tive factor in strengthening our own capabilities. Following this just and consistent policy, we have not only earned the esteem and aid of our friends; we were also able to increase our fighting spirit during the war and improve the material and technical conditions of life during reconstruction.

11. From this rostrum we reiterate our sincerest gratitude to all fraternal socialist countries that have given us substantial, effective and selfless aid during the long wartime period and in the course of the present reconstruction.

12. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the non-aligned countries which, despite their own difficulties, have given us bilateral assistance and demonstrated their solidarity by contributing to the non-aligned solidarity fund for Laos and Viet Nam. Our thanks go also to all other friendly countries, particularly the Nordic nations and certain Western countries, and to the international organizations within the United Nations system, as well as to all of the others that came to our aid in our efforts to heal the wounds of war and rebuild our country in the immediate post-war period.

13. That international assistance, participated in by several developing countries whose national economies are still undergoing major difficulties, is a manifestation of the universal conscience in the face of one of the greatest tragedies of history, the imperialist war of aggression against the people of Viet Nam.

14. We regret, however, that for the last few years, despite so splendid a manifestation of the universal conscience, the United States Government should not have taken an attitude in accord with the responsibility that the situation in Viet Nam placed upon it.

15. Recently, at a luncheon on 5 October of this year for representatives of Asian countries, President Carter solemnly declared: "In South East Asia we are repairing the damage of the recent war." We earnestly hope that that statement will be translated into concrete deeds and that the United States Government will adopt an attitude more positive in terms of honour and responsibility.

AGENDA ITEM 21

Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination

16. The PRESIDENT: As representatives are aware, the States to replace those members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination whose term of office expires on 31 December 1977 are nominated by the Economic and Social Council and elected by the General Assembly.

17. Document A/32/127 contains a note by the Secretary-General informing the Assembly that the Economic and Social Council has nominated the following States: Brazil, Burundi, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan and Kenya. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly declares these States elected members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination for a term of three years beginning 1 January 1978.

18. The PRESIDENT: I should like to congratulate those States which have just been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

AGENDA ITEM 52

Special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament: report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

AGENDA ITEM 100

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979

19. The PRESIDENT: There is another matter which was not on our agenda for this morning but which I should like to put before the Assembly, concerning a unanimous recommendation of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament [A/32/41, para. 20]. This recommendation was made in the light of the programme of construction scheduled to take place at the Headquarters building in New York in 1978 and 1979, as decided by General Assembly resolution 31/195.

20. As members are aware, the General Assembly decided at its 5th plenary meeting on 23 September 1977, on the recommendation of the General Committee [A/32/250, para. 24 (b) (ii)], that the Assembly should take a decision by 15 October 1977 concerning the reversal of the phases of the construction work at United Nations Headquarters to make the General Assembly Hall available for the special session devoted to disarmament in 1978. The recommendation of the Preparatory Committee was brought to the attention of the Fifth Committee.

21. I understand that the Fifth Committee considered the matter yesterday at its 16th meeting and decided without objection to inform the Assembly that the rescheduling of construction work in the General Assembly hall from 1978 to 1979 would not involve any increase in the cost estimates. Accordingly, if there is no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reverse the phases of the construction work at Headquarters so that the General Assembly Hall will be available for the special session in 1978.

It was so decided (decision 32/403).

The meeting was suspended at 11.50 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

Address by Mr. Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic

22. The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, the President of the Gabonese Republic and current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity. On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo and to invite him to address the Assembly.

23. Mr. BONGO (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): Seven years ago, from this same rostrum, I had the signal honour, President of the Gabonese Republic, of addressing the twenty-fifth session of this illustrious Assembly.¹

24. Today it falls to me, as the incumbent Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity [OAU], to be the spokesman of our continental community.

25. In that capacity, I take the greatest pleasure in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your brilliant election.

26. I salute in you one whose experience, tact and moderation transcend national considerations and guarantee the success of the work of the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

27. I wish to add all the more warmth to my personal greetings in view of the long-standing excellent relations between your country and a large number of African States.

28. Yugoslavia is dear to us. It symbolizes for us the sacred ethic of non-alignment. It is non-aligned not only in the way in which it is developing its relations with the nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America, but it is also non-aligned over-all in its constant initiatives and its international conduct, in its relations and negotiations with the great Powers of the world. Obviously this is an attitude in keeping with the aspirations of the African people.

29. My greetings and compliments also go to all the other officers of the Assembly, whose competence and sense of responsibility give us another guarantee of the success of our work.

30. For having spared no effort during his term of office, with a view to achieving positive results—results to which we all aspire in all fields—the President of the thirty-first session deserves our most heartfelt gratitude.

31. Finally, I cannot pass over in silence the remarkable achievements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations reflected in the report [A/32/I], masterly both in form and content, he has submitted to this Assembly and which will not fail to enrich our debate and to shed light on so many of the items on our agenda. A pilgrim, not to say an apostle, of peace, the Secretary-General has never hesitated to take a stand when he had to and when circumstances called for his intervention and arbitration. So I thank him for his excellent report and for his tireless efforts to reduce the tensions which are unhappily on the increase in the world and particularly in the continent of Africa.

32. However, this observation should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that since the last session of this Assembly a number of countries have attained international sovereignty and I am delighted to see that our Organization has

accordingly been enriched by the addition of two new Members: Djibouti and Viet Nam. I wish to congratulate them most sincerely and to wish them, on behalf of the OAU, success in the difficult task of exercising international sovereignty. By the admission of these two countries our Organization has expanded its influence and is thus fulfilling its fundamental purpose.

33. This session will be dealing with a number of political and economic problems as well as problems of international co-operation, which are of extreme gravity in terms of the extent to which our future depends on their solution. On this point I believe that no one will be surprised if I express faithfully the disappointment, impatience and even bitterness of all African hearts.

34. Is there really any need to recall the reasons why not only the leaders of the African States but also their peoples and, throughout the world, all those who share their love of justice and dignity, are annoyed at the constant outrages to which they are subjected?

35. The primary reason for our frustration and our revulsion stems from the repeated setbacks of the United Nations and its inability to heal the wound in Africa's side and to remedy the ills and distress from which Africa is suffering.

36. The wound is the insult to the aspirations, the dignity and the freedom of too many of our brothers, to their inalienable right to be human beings, to their unchallengeable sovereignty over their own soil, their own country.

37. These ills and this suffering are due to the inevitable decline of the less developed countries caused by a most unfair international economic order which is geared to the satisfaction of the interests of the countries richest in resources. Is there any need once again to remind them that under cover of magnanimous speeches they are building, in arrogance and often in total disregard of the weakest, colossal fortunes and impressive power, which have now become their strength and, unfortunately, the law of the world?

38. In 1945 after the holocaust of the Second World War and the devastation left in its wake, the representatives of 52 countries met in San Francisco and founded an organization dedicated to the defence of peace and to the establishment of an era of justice, progress and happiness for all peoples. A Charter emerged, its purpose being to define, in principle, the means of achieving this ambitious programme.

39. When the African countries gained international sovereignty, they often enthusiastically accepted both its rules and its spirit. Enthusiastically, I say, because their leaders were uplifted by an immense hope for peace, solidarity and co-operation. Having gained independence they hoped to be able to work easily and rapidly towards development, an improved standard of living and the prosperity of their peoples.

40. That Charter calls on all those who have signed it to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1867th meeting (commemorative session)*, paras. 99-118.

safeguard fundamental human rights, and equality among nations whatever the level of their power, to establish conditions under which justice can be maintained and to promote social progress and to ensure the welfare of all.

41. If we consider the situation now prevailing in southern Africa and unfortunately in many other places, can we really believe that this solemn pledge has been honoured?

42. Like people everywhere in the world the inhabitants of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe aspire to dignity, freedom, justice and happiness. Have their wishes been met? Has their natural right to self-determination been respected, culminating in independence? Obviously not, since millions of them are living under the political, economic and military yoke of white minorities. Those minorities base their law on the most immoral, the most misguided and the most unjustifiable concept of racism, that of the alleged superiority of one race over another.

43. Indeed, we must restate firmly that the masses deprived of the fundamental rights of man are living like pariahs in the land of their ancestors. Freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement, the freedom to possess and dispose of property and lastly the freedom to form nations and to achieve self-government, indeed all those rights which underlie our life and our dignity which the United Nations was established to defend and guarantee, are contested in their case and denied them.

44. On our fellow human beings, treated as subhumans, an iniquitous power is imposed by the so-called separate development of the famous "national homelands" or bantustans, which are a parody of a homeland and government.

45. Despite our warnings and our censure the ingredients of a major crisis are becoming increasingly obvious year after year in southern Africa, where 3.6 million whites are imposing a brutal and hypocritical régime of domination on 15 million blacks. Apart even from all moral considerations such a population imbalance makes a trial of strength inevitable.

46. Although oppressed and subjected to a veritable régime of close surveillance, the majority will not suffer their wretched condition indefinitely. To imagine the contrary would be to attribute to them no courage, no self-respect. Such dreams demonstrate the blindness and the mediocrity of their temporary masters.

47. Such contempt for human beings is a kind of madness.

48. From what abysses of the soul have the whites of South Africa dredged up such monstrous pride?

49. In their place, any Government would relax its policy. It would moderate segregation in the hope of alleviating trouble in the future. Oddly enough, Mr. Vorster and his ministers are leaving that option aside. To the risks of change they prefer those of immobility.

50. True, they enjoy indisputable physical superiority. They are armed; they are organized. They are awaiting the

battle on a firm footing, entrenched behind their tanks, their cannons and their machine-guns. In the conviction that they will wipe out the enemy, as they did at Sharpeville and Soweto, they see no reason to make any concessions.

51. Let us never tire of repeating that such a hasty calculation overlooks the essential point, which is the uprising of despair. Sooner or later, this despair of our brothers will explode.

52. *Apartheid* is storing up tremendous retribution. It contains the seed of a frightful vengeance. In the old world and the new everyone is aware of this truth. But by dint of too much repetition, certain obvious facts lose their strength. Everyone becomes so used to them that they end up by overlooking them because they see them so clearly. The racial segregation in Cape Town, in Pretoria and in the mines and suburbs of Johannesburg stands out in the history of the twentieth century as a monument of shame.

53. For nearly 30 years now, this has been a stench in our nostrils, and the stink is all the worse as the end draws near. With a strange blend of obliviousness and impertinence, its builders justify their iniquities on the basis of their 330 years of settlement in the land. Though that is true, it smacks of sophistry because it is so far from the point.

54. Even had they been there from time immemorial, like the Africans in the same region, that would grant them no licence to treat other men like beasts.

55. In our view, this is the only principle to be considered. Apart from this certitude, there is no possible discussion.

56. Sooner or later, excess destroys itself.

57. The excessive humiliation to which so-called "separate development" exposes our brothers is driving them to revolt, just as it is making it our duty to help them. There should be no doubt on this score, particularly among the Western Powers.

58. Of course, Vorster has long banked on their understanding and indulgence. The volume of foreign investment in his industry has multiplied his power tenfold and fortified his political and social system.

59. The dynamism of the South African economy provides it with impressive military resources. After all, it produces the helicopters, light aircraft and air-to-air missiles indispensable to its defence. Gold and diamonds from an immensely rich subsoil also provide it with an inexhaustible war treasury. It thus seems invincible.

60. Yet its successful functioning depends nevertheless on those it oppresses. A vast black work force brings it the invaluable contribution of its labour. A strike of a few weeks would suffice not only to paralyse it but also to create panic among investors.

61. Modern industry is rendered by its complex efficiency particularly vulnerable. The slightest accident upsets and disorganizes it. It cannot tolerate the unforeseeable. Still less can it tolerate prolonged social tension.

62. The integration of black workers into the productive machine of the white South Africans hangs over them like the sword of Damocles, which they can no longer ignore.

63. So far, our brothers have made little use of this form of combat. It is none the less in the forefront of their minds.

64. The West knows this, as is shown by a recent change in the policy of some of the Western Powers. As a recent development in the policy of some of these Powers shows, it no longer views the position of the segregationist nations with the same indulgent tranquillity as before.

65. All moral considerations aside, *apartheid* is so fundamentally wrong that it can no longer be defended by anyone.

66. The shock of the happenings in Soweto last year was the signal of irreversible changes. Events of such magnitude do not occur unexpectedly nor do all its consequences emerge at once.

67. A return to relative calm in no way conceals the fact that after years of progress the self-confidence of South Africa itself has sustained a severe blow. Investors are becoming scarcer, and its external friends less reliable.

68. As diseases with long incubation periods are rarely cured quickly, so political crises that have been built up through decades of mistakes are not going to be damped down overnight. The crisis of southern Africa has been building up a long time, and it will go on building up for a long time to come.

69. In spite of their constant unwillingness to face the facts squarely, Westerners are well aware that the fall of the segregationist régime seems as inevitable to them as it does to us. To a certain extent, they even glimpse the necessity for it.

70. *Apartheid* in fact fans dangerous tensions in one of the world's most strategically important areas, which it thus exposes to unforeseeable upheavals.

71. This threat strikes fear into the countries from which Mr. Vorster has for so long been getting political, economic and military aid. Those countries have nothing to gain from continuing on such a perilous course.

72. But with the hazards it entails, change also frightens them. They fear that local disturbances will bring a hostile Government to power and place the Cape route under the control of the enemy's fleet.

73. Even those with only the faintest notion of geopolitics cannot fail to realize that this would upset the international balance of power.

74. Between this threat and the danger of the *status quo*, America and Europe are scarcely hesitating any longer on the principles, even if they still waver in their actions. Their calculations and their apprehensions are finally reducing the South African tragedy to this simple question: though nothing can any longer prevent the fall of a despised order, what can be done to prevent it from entailing irremediable diplomatic and military complications?

75. It is certainly not for us to offer a perfect solution to this problem. There are too many different factors involved. We do not have the perfect solution, nor does anyone else, as Mr. Vorster well knows. So he is seeking to exploit our uncertainty. He is begging the universe for just a little more time. But time to do what?

76. After almost 30 years of discrimination based on the enslavement of a whole people, does he not have the experience needed to bring about major reforms, if he really wants them? After the warning of Sharpeville, he and his peers have had enough time to abandon their execrable doctrines. But instead of so doing, they are clinging to them. The additional time that they are asking for, with promises of making amends, is one of those delaying tactics that any self-respecting policy does not take seriously.

77. Without claiming to have the key to such an exceptionally complex situation, we refuse to play the game of an irreconcilable enemy and to grant him the truce that he seeks in the hope of misleading us once again.

78. Neither is it incumbent on us to say by what institutional machinery, by what parties, by what men the black majority will gain its independence, nor even whether the future government of Pretoria will be multiracial.

79. Obviously, the black people of South Africa include many distinguished, competent and reasonable persons. The public responsibility which they take over must be in proportion to what they represent. For this reason alone, the abolition of *apartheid* is a matter not of time but of principle.

80. The abominable racial segregation blocks all political negotiation. It must, therefore, be eliminated, not in six years, six months or six weeks, but right now. The slightest delay will convert into fury the legitimate revolt of an increasingly vociferous majority. The opportunities for extremists and the risks of irreparable complications will necessarily be increased. For our part, we refuse even to consider the possibility of such a monstrous waste. The whole purpose of human intelligence is to avert catastrophe.

81. Our peoples will spare no effort to assist their unfortunate brothers. Their fate involves not only justice but the security of the continent. That security will remain uncertain, vulnerable and illusory as long as such a source of international crisis remains at our very doorstep.

82. In 1976, the tragedy of Soweto seemed to take the whole world by surprise. Yet Gabon, along with other countries, had not waited for it to burst upon them in order to take an interest in the South African liberation movements. In 1975, it had set up a meeting of their delegations at Libreville. It firmly backs the establishment of national power in their country. Apart from this just and sensible solution, there is no way of staving off disaster.

83. We therefore solemnly call upon the Western Powers to suspend the aid that they still lavish in various forms on an anachronistic, retrograde and cruel regime.

84. Simultaneously and with equal vigour, we call upon all Powers, in the West or in the East, to refrain from any intervention liable to aggravate the troubles in the southern hemisphere.

85. Directly or through one of their allies, they would be intervening in principle to fight either Marxism or imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

86. We are already familiar with all those old justifications. We have long known that the dominant ideology always serves as a pretext for great interests.

87. By one of those diversions of which the history of man provides so many examples, the ideal of a struggle of peoples against Powers has simply become a weapon, a means of intimidation, in the struggle between the Powers. This trend is in conformity with too commonplace a law to be surprising. Therefore, instead of becoming victims of it, let our sense of realism draw the proper conclusions.

88. Africa will not lend its support or its illusions to an anti-Marxism or to an anti-imperialism transformed into instruments of neo-colonial or imperial conquest.

89. Fifteen or so years ago, our States joined the concert of nations with the somewhat ingenuous belief of all young countries in ideology. The words "democracy" and "liberty" echoed in our hearts like the promise of a new era, and they aroused our enthusiasm. The Powers cast on our faith the icy disenchantment of pitiless cynicism. But we shall not be ill-mannered enough to resent it. The inevitably painful initiation into the truth of life has its price.

90. Having conceded this, we must not allow the gap between words and deed to assume too scandalous proportions.

91. What is the good of talking of justice or of emancipation if they both stop at the Zambezi?

92. The misfortune of our brothers makes it incumbent upon us to prepare to deliver them. Once the noble fight has begun for them, no one can doubt that we will have to win it for ourselves.

93. In the face of such monstrous genocide, of this threatened tragedy, whose dangers our Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, does not underestimate, what must, what can, the United Nations do?

94. So far, it has certainly not remained totally inactive. It has issued many moral condemnations. It has passed dozens of resolutions, most of which remain, unfortunately, dead letters. It has organized conferences, where intransigence, moderation and hypocrisy have clashed—as they do everywhere—without any practical results.

95. On the question of South West Africa, over which the old League of Nations had given the then Union of South Africa an administrative Mandate, the United Nations has taken decisions. In particular, it terminated that Mandate [resolution 2145 (XXI)] and set 30 May 1975 as the date for the withdrawal of the forces of South Africa from Namibia.

96. We regret to note that after more than two years that deadline has not been met. The Pretoria Government is calmly disregarding the implications of this and is thus fearlessly defying the international community.

97. Similarly, the United Nations has called for economic sanctions against the rebel British colony of Rhodesia, which was declared a republic by a handful of white settlers. But those whom the United Nations condemns nevertheless remain prosperous, thanks to the sometimes unexpected complicity that they find throughout the world.

98. Here we touch on the limits of the real powers of the United Nations. It has very limited resources in the face of any Power determined to disregard its decisions. Of course, the United Nations can in theory resort to military force but any such recourse must be warranted by a threat to the peace pursuant to Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter.

99. During this time the great Powers often play a destructive game. Some of them treat our continent as a reservoir of raw materials, while others see in it a field for manoeuvre for the sake of subversion. Before defending an economic doctrine, a social system, they pit against each other their hegemonies and their respective but antagonistic leanings towards universal empire. Liberty, democracy, the right of peoples to self-determination, which they invoke one against the other in their polemics, are aimed as usual only at placing principles at the service of force.

100. A poor continent cannot afford to yield to outside pressures without risking immediate disruption. For fear of catastrophe, we must decline this infernal dialectic of violence and death, which, unfortunately, is in keeping with the eternal laws of struggle between empires.

101. If we do not succeed in making equitable decisions possible in southern Africa the failure will immediately serve as an excuse for even more perilous outside interference. Africa is shown on maps as one of the five parts of the world. This commonplace has one simple consequence: its equilibrium involves that of the planet. In a century in which all interests are becoming interdependent, to fail to understand this necessity is tantamount to failure to understand one of the major laws of our time: that true policy knows neither pity nor caprice.

102. No great Power ever watches the destruction of another without reacting. Each seeks to support its friends, its interests, its clients. For both the slightest abdication leaves the field open to the adversary. In this jungle of the fight for international hegemony no one acts lightly.

103. By the force of circumstances, under the spur of physical inevitability, any serious crisis would truly degenerate in Africa into a struggle for influence between the supremacists. It would involve stakes much higher than we can afford. Only suicidal folly can admit such disasters.

104. Africa needs peace. We firmly believe this. Normally, pacifism is based on the certainty that reciprocal goodwill will eliminate all antagonism among Governments. Ours is based on a rather less cheerful view of world affairs. Apart

from peace, our continent's difficulties leave it only a limited choice between different kinds of catastrophe.

105. It is for us, therefore, a matter of escaping the blocs which purvey arms and bellicose ideologies. This is the undeniable truth which must be faced realistically. Peace, and peace alone, will preserve us from foreign interference and guarantee our independence. If the conditions for this are not met we have to expect the worst.

106. Ideological fervour may persuade some to act otherwise, to pay lip service to that peace the need for which they feel only half-heartedly. In such a case they should be prepared for some very unpleasant surprises. He who sows the wind will always reap the whirlwind.

107. These thoughts, as we know, are in no way exciting or revolutionary. They are confined to observations of quite prosaic common sense. But what are we to do if enthusiasm so often deceives men and leads them astray? However, realism and modesty do not exclude determination. The indubitable need for peace commits us to defend it tirelessly.

108. Yet the OAU recognizes the right of our brothers in South Africa to free themselves in any way they deem fit. To this end, pursuant to the resolutions adopted at the fourteenth regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Libreville this year [see A/32/310], it is providing their liberation movements with whole-hearted diplomatic, financial, material and military support, without forgetting for a moment the fight they are waging in the field, to their courage and sacrifices in which I should like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute here.

109. The international community and the countries which comprise it can nevertheless do much to silence the weapons and enable millions of Africans to recover their dignity and liberty. We solemnly call on them to take the necessary steps without delay, including the one we consider the most appropriate at this time, that is, the isolation of the Republic of South Africa by a total and effective boycott, in particular an economic boycott, going as far as the elimination of the aid and investments which it enjoys from other nations of the world.

110. One cannot continue with impunity to balance the lives of millions of human beings enslaved in their own country, against material interests, which certainly are substantial but whose profits can hardly compare with what they cost in suffering and humiliation. Otherwise, the only thing left would be to despair for ever of the human race.

111. How can we overlook the fact, proved by experience, that the five permanent members of the Security Council, armed with a negative and paralysing veto, do not give the same consideration to our interests as they would to their own? The legal dominance which they enjoy merely sanctions the supremacy of the five Powers which emerged victorious from the Second World War. But in the 32 years which have elapsed since 1945 the world has nevertheless changed. In all logic, the functioning of the United Nations should change also and should reflect the new correlations of power which have emerged since that time.

112. When the Third Reich capitulated, Africa existed politically only through the sovereignty of the colonial Powers. The veto of France and Britain reflected not only their moral or military participation in the victory of the democracies but also their sovereignty over vast empires. Today those empires have vanished.

113. By what right should the privileges they gave themselves persist to the end of time, when a continent which has become free, like Africa, does not have the same powers? Therefore we solemnly ask that a member of the OAU designated for one year by our continental organization should henceforth sit among the members of the Security Council, with the same rights and the same duties. Our claim will seem surprising, but it simply reflects the impatience of the new countries with the many hypocrisies and the disguised paternalism of an immobile world.

114. However, with all their suffering and anguish, Africans are none the less concerned with other centres of tension and war still existing in the world. In Cyprus, the memory of whose great fallen leader, the late Archbishop Makarios, I salute, foreign forces must be withdrawn. The territorial integrity of that island and its status as a non-aligned country must be respected. The conflict should be resolved by dialogue between the Cypriot communities alone.

115. Likewise in Korea, the road to peace, that is to say, reunification, must inevitably lie through a continuing dialogue between Koreans of the North and the South.

116. Regarding the Middle East dispute, in which some African States are involved, the position of the OAU has not changed.

117. We believe that peace can and must prevail in that part of the world, which is rich in history and dear to all mankind, and that the present time seems auspicious for a final settlement of the dispute in a manner satisfactory to all the peoples of the region.

118. However, we also feel that the road to such peace lies through unequivocal recognition of the right of the Palestinians to possess a country and through the withdrawal of the Israelis from the Arab lands they have occupied since 1967, as well through strict application by the belligerents of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), to which they have subscribed.

119. That being said, it remains for me only to refer to that other great evil I mentioned at the outset of my speech and which affects Africa and the third world.

120. A true philosopher, one with a sense of irony, would doubtless be amused by the variable and fluctuating ideas which in turn inspire enthusiasm in men. In Europe the cult of materialism succeeded in a hundred years that of reason, not without certain detours through liberty, progress, science, socialism and nationalism. In their zeal, Westerners have even carried their enthusiasm to the point of killing one another because of these high-sounding words. Since the Second World War the dogma of development is in the ascendant. It clearly owes its tremendous popularity to the failure and the agony of what had been major catchwords.

In a so-called “consumer” society, work related to the proliferation of consumer products is naturally in the forefront.

121. In our countries, development also fires the imagination, but in a way very different from the meaning it has for the industrial peoples. Obviously we are not contemplating manufacturing more for the sole purpose of consuming more but rather for the purpose of obtaining the necessary instead of the superfluous and of conquering sickness and poverty. Once these goals have been reached, we shall have to acquire enough strength to free ourselves from foreign patronage in so far as possible. However, these gigantic tasks do not contain within themselves a remedy for all our ills: Let us beware of considering development as a kind of reconciling god, providing both an explanation and a solution for the difficulties of community life. The disturbances it causes in traditional societies give rise to nearly as many complications as the shortages it remedies. So we should resort to it with a great deal of caution and without undue haste. Despite its great merits, development does not do away with the constants of history. Some of our States are split by tenacious political and ideological rivalries. All factors promote such a split, especially their conceptions of the future of the world.

122. Being convinced that in the last analysis every dispute can be reduced to economic rivalries, to plus or minus signs on curves and statistics, certain Western leaders attribute these conflicts to poverty. According to them, steady improvement in the standard of living will sooner or later overcome the most persistent antagonisms. If “an empty stomach has no ears”, according to them, a full stomach has none either. Such a concept of life will always surprise us by its naïvete. To imagine that wealth alone can extinguish any conflict by its own prestige attributes to it the improbable one virtue of being able to defuse conflicts for which men would sacrifice wealth itself to win. Such an urge to escape the conditions of physical existence is astonishing. It calls to mind that other proverb: “He who would be an angel becomes a devil.”

123. To our doubts the advocates of economism reply perhaps that there is no longer any reason to fight when an abundance of goods discourages the very need to win them. This kind of fable appeals to the rich and the spoiled. Conflicts between governments ordinarily contain causes too diverse to be reasonably reduced to one single cause. Our experience and our dignity as the poor rise up against a view of existence in which profusion of goods becomes the supreme and almost the only value in life.

124. The States rising up from decolonization, for their part, are building on completely different foundations. With all due deference to the technocrats, growth has only a weak influence over the collective instinct.

125. Europe itself does not escape this law. Does a general opulence keep the French from watching with apprehension the tremendous strides of Germany and the pre-eminence of the German mark on the foreign exchange market? Astounding technological records set in recent years by Westerners hardly prevent them from taking umbrage at Japanese exports.

126. The United States is sometimes frightened by the progress made by former beneficiaries of the Marshall Plan.

127. Seen from any angle, expansion does not bring abundance alone. It also gives rise to competition, and inevitably bestirs long-standing feelings of aggression latent in every nation.

128. While we do not expect development to produce miracles, we still expect much of it. We know it is a desirable and necessary harbinger of massive change. Yet it must be adapted to the needs of our fellow-countrymen and subjected to indispensable controls and to social discipline. Having conceded these rules, with what delight would we not see development introduce new patterns of life, even in nature? The country in which the trans-Gabonese railway is under construction is determined to be modern. It certainly does not stand for stagnation, much less for a pastoral, bewitching past built on dreams.

129. The old world was a hard one for our fathers. Only forgetful minds overlook its rigours and its cruelties. Because they have experienced them, our villagers will not agree to its prolongation. For them, present development has the very positive meaning of daily improvements. With simplicity, they identify development with concrete results: the school, the dispensary, transport—that is to say, often without realizing it, health and work. However humble, prosaic and limited they may seem, these objectives are the same as those of any Power conscious of its responsibilities. Neither the Government nor the citizens for which it is responsible intends to give it up. From the very moment when he crosses the threshold of the presidential palace, every African leader assumes responsibility for the well-being of his fellow-countrymen, not only in a general administrative way, as in the industrial countries, but in terms of the trials and tribulations relieved.

130. Development, therefore, is one of the most imperative duties and obligations. Necessary as it is, economic progress does not occur in the abstract. In this regard, the so-called “poor” countries are going through a particularly critical phase. Under the cumulative effect of the deterioration in the terms of trade, monetary disruption and world inflation, they are becoming ever poorer, and the gap separating them from the rich countries is becoming ever wider. Of the 25 poorest countries in the world, 18 are in Africa. Most have trade balances showing ever-larger deficits, and their indebtedness is in all cases worsening and approaching the intolerable. This situation discourages development and generates under-productivity, scarcity and a decline in the standard of living, with all the attendant claims, distress and social disturbance.

131. The industrialized nations, whose trade system devised on the basis of their needs alone has put us in this desperate position, should understand that they too are threatened by worsening unemployment and inflation and, consequently, by economic recession if their raw materials suppliers stop supplying them and, in their impoverishment, purchase less from them.

132. Of course, it can be retorted that we do receive aid from those nations. Compared to the gigantic programmes established after the war through the Marshall Plan, such

aid seems inadequate and paltry in nature, volume and organization. For this reason, the time has come to tell the truth about it. To confine myself to the Western countries, public aid tends, as is well known, to decline in relation to private investments, which, as is equally well known, are returned with exorbitant profits. Thus, for example, if we deduct from the amount offered in aid to the third world in a recent year the loan repayments and the benefits from tied aid, the assistance parsimoniously doled out fails to reach even one fourth of the total amount for the Development Assistance Committee countries—in other words, less than 0.20 to 0.25 per cent of those countries' gross national product, or 10 times less than their advertising outlays to stimulate overconsumption, which is mere superfluity and illusion. Africa repays the industrialized countries, in the form of public debt, nearly 75 per cent of the sums received in aid. Combined with the impact of a deterioration in the terms of trade, its indebtedness is increasing twice as fast as the export earnings normally expected to cover it. Tied aid accounts for almost 80 per cent of bilateral aid. But through profits, the salaries of experts, excessive charges by research bureaus often of doubtful competence, and the sale of equipment and patents to which it gives rise, such aid generally recovers 80 per cent of the sums laid out, in principle, out of selfless altruism. It can therefore be considered as a disguised subsidy for the export of goods and services from the developed countries granting such aid. This is the truth, however unpleasant and unpalatable it may seem to be.

133. True, we must doubtless rely primarily on ourselves. But it is also necessary for our products to receive fair remuneration, and for greater equity to prevail in the expansion of world trade, so as to ensure that our savings are not the constant prey of exchange hazards resulting from monetary adjustments and fluctuations unilaterally decided upon by the industrialized nations in their own exclusive interests. In this connexion, we had high hopes for the outcome of the North-South dialogue—the Conference on International Economic Co-operation—and it is with great bitterness that we now note that it produced few, if any, results. In these circumstances, will the blindness of the privileged reduce us to despair?

134. On behalf of 200 million people, we ask their representatives if they are really weighing their heavy responsibilities. Having agreed to meet together here, we must, I believe, consider other ways and means of reorganizing and improving world trade for the long term.

135. Hence, it appears urgent to us to formulate a new international economic policy based on fair organization of markets and on the active renewal of co-operation with the third world.

136. We should like to hope that the fifth session of UNCTAD, to be held in Manila in 1979, will find a solution acceptable to all concerned for this serious problem.

137. But in the meantime we must solemnly reaffirm the exclusive sovereignty of States over their resources and give them, by an appropriate transfer of technologies, the means of processing those resources themselves, in so far as is possible, in order to protect them to a large extent from a decline in the terms of trade.

138. Concurrently, the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board must move ahead with the common fund plan and also the setting up of a credit guarantee programme for the exports of poor countries.

139. Here in broad outline are the principal problems of our continent as we face them in this second half of the twentieth century. This description of them and the remedies suggested will of course be met with the understanding which we are entitled to expect from this Assembly.

140. We want peace and on this earth everyone claims it to be the greatest and most precious of all goods. Officially, even the crudest warmongers do not hesitate to claim to be champions of peace. According to a well-known scenario, out-and-out aggressors even contend that they are defending the interests of peace every time they pull the trigger. But apparently this precious, much-sought-after treasure is something to be found only with the greatest difficulty.

141. This blatant contradiction between the results achieved and the desired goal makes one wonder a little. Non-aggression treaties proliferate without slowing down the arms race. The United Nations deliberates like a sort of parliament of nations on an international scale, but without many of the votes taken doing much to reduce human misery. Further, since the end of the Second World War, not a day has passed without blood being shed somewhere in the world: in India, China, Korea, Viet Nam, Algeria and the Middle East, to say nothing of other hecatombs, as if a tragic kind of predestination were haunting the whole of mankind.

142. In Africa itself several conflicts haunt the memories of us all and illustrate this fatal destiny. The continent will develop only if it is determined to escape from it but, contrary to many illusions, peace cannot be decreed. It must be won, earned, by perseverance and determination. These virtues naturally cannot be exercised in the void. They require respect for certain rules, beginning with tolerance among States with different political and social systems. There is no doubt that innumerable foreign policy resolutions sanction this principle. Sometimes it bears the attractive name of peaceful coexistence. According to its supporters themselves, this pacificism applies, however, only to diplomacy and trade; it is not concerned with ideology. On the contrary, it admits in that respect the actual persistence of vigorous antagonism.

143. This strange combination is supposed to reconcile opposites. In fact, governmental doctrines inspire the life of peoples just as private convictions inspire the lives of individuals. Mutual respect alone guarantees sincere understanding, devoid of mental reservations.

144. The intensification of theoretical controversy can only, however, provide new occasions for disputes; otherwise words would have no further meaning.

145. Today I have the signal and formidable privilege of speaking before you on behalf of some 200 million underprivileged people.

146. Whenever I see our continent on the globe, I am struck immediately by its massive, compact, powerful

silhouette, withdrawn within itself as if hiding some fearsome secret. What future, what riddles are hidden behind that sober, inscrutable outline? Where the coastline of Europe stretches out to infinity in the capricious arabesques of its coasts, where the Americas stretch powerfully from the Polar icecaps to Tierra del Fuego, where Asia spreads its horizontal mass over a third of the world, our Africa, as it were, gathers itself in the middle of the globe as if it were its heart.

147. According to paleontologists, Africa was the cradle of the human race millions of years ago. We are not so vainglorious as to claim any credit.

148. Like individuals, peoples feel legitimate pride in their own achievements or in those of their forefathers, not in hazardous, remote circumstances extraneous to their merits and their will.

149. The Africans of the twentieth century clearly have no responsibility for the antediluvian peopling of the space which they now occupy. They cannot even be sure of identifying their ancestors among those distant, remote strangers of our prehistory. Only fossils attest that they lived and hunted where we now walk and build our cities.

150. We therefore evoke their memory with only one single certainty: the future of Africa lies before us, certainly not in a remote past. With its ambiguities, its pitfalls, it in any case sufficiently absorbs our attention and does not make it possible for us to lapse into a reverie on the banks of the river of time when more immediate, pressing tasks call for unceasing vigilance.

151. Make no mistake about it: just as children bear within them the virtues and short-comings of their fathers, the Africa of tomorrow will be profoundly marked by the Africa of today.

152. "Our actions stay with us," as a famous French historian observed in the first half of the century. Our actions inevitably will affect future generations. We certainly hope to transmit to them a heritage of power and peace.

153. Unhappily, the heritage that we have had bequeathed to us scarcely resembles a blank page on which it would be enough for us to write down everything we want. Nevertheless, if obstacles do concern us, they do not frighten us, and still less do they discourage us. Africa appears before you, strong in its honour, with the determination to assume its rightful place in a world from which strife has been banished by progress and enlightenment.

154. As for you, my dear African brothers, it is on behalf of this Africa which is so dear to us all, on behalf of the OAU and by virtue of the mandate which all of you were good enough to confer upon me, that I should like to appeal to your common sense, to your feelings as Africans, to African solidarity, and to African philosophy in order that our petty quarrels may come to an end, our selfishness cease and, more than ever before, we may show the world that Africans have understood, that Africans know, when they so wish, how to settle their problems *à l'africaine*. That is why we must more than ever before respect the resolutions which all of us freely adopted during our meetings at the fourteenth regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OUA in Libreville.

155. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon and current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, for the important statement which he has just made.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.