

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records



**26th  
PLENARY MEETING**

Monday, 11 October 1976,  
at 3.30 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Address by Mr. John M. G. M Adams, Prime Minister of Barbados .....	499
Agenda item 9:	
General debate ( <i>continued</i> )	
Speech by Mr. Bongo (Gabon) .....	502
Speech by Mr. Adamou (Niger) .....	506
Speech by Mr. Gayoom (Maldives) .....	510

*President:* Mr. Hamilton Shirley AMERASINGHE  
(Sri Lanka).

*Address by Mr. John M. G. M Adams, Prime Minister of Barbados*

1. The PRESIDENT: This afternoon the Assembly will hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Barbados. I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency the Honourable John M. G. M. Adams and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

2. Mr. ADAMS (Barbados): Mr. President, the Barbados delegation wishes to add its congratulations to those which have already been so eloquently expressed on your election to preside over the current session of this august Assembly. Your election clearly reflects the esteem in which the State which you represent is held in this Organization. Your country, like Barbados, is an island plagued—but, I am happy to say, not paralysed—by economic problems. In the face of serious difficulties, the commitment of your country to extending the frontiers of international justice and equality is particularly welcome. We wish to acknowledge also your personal contribution to the negotiations that have taken place to establish an international régime for the use of the resources of the sea and the sea-bed. The people of Barbados have followed with keen interest and a sense of optimism these deliberations and have observed with constant admiration the skill which you have been displaying as President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

3. My delegation wishes to place on record, too, its appreciation for the unstinted application and diligence of the Secretary-General of this Organization, who has quietly and seriously pursued the maintenance of international peace and security in the very troubled months of the last year.

4. My delegation, which represents a small but proud and industrious people of the Caribbean, wishes to restate its commitment to two sacred principles, namely, the principle of the equality of States and the principle of the univer-

ality of this Organization. As far as the equality of States is concerned, countries like Barbados are aware of the ease with which the strong and mighty nations are often alternately bored and irritated by what are considered the empty pretensions and vain posturings of small States. Many large and wealthy States subscribe understandably to the maxim that he who pays the piper should call the tune, and they seek to call the tune for small States like Barbados. But the attitude of painful tolerance does not take account of the part which the sober interventions of small States can, and do, play in the heated debates and discussions which often preoccupy the attention of the world and impinge upon the deliberations and discussions of this body.

5. Conscious of the possible contribution of the small States, Barbados happily anticipates the imminent participation of fellow States from the Caribbean, including Belize, in the activities of the United Nations. We island people from the Caribbean stand at the cross-roads where history meets and where alien civilizations converge. I use the word "at" advisedly. I hasten to point out that our role is not to stand in the cross-roads, to be trampled by strong and conflicting forces—and there are many abroad in the Caribbean—but to use our experience to influence the course of international developments. We, the small island States of the Caribbean, are peace-loving, progressive and democratic States. Indeed, it is the tide of democracy that has brought me here to this forum after 15 years of loyal opposition in Parliament. As members of the Assembly will note, we of Barbados and of the Caribbean are not only peace-loving, progressive and proud; we are also patient.

6. May I again underline our commitment to the universality of this Organization. This delegation does not hold the view that retaliation born of pique and false pride arising out of lost causes should frustrate the legitimate desires of nations to become members of the United Nations. In this regard, this delegation hopes that a way will be found to welcome to our numbers the unrepresented millions of formerly war-torn Angola, Korea and Viet Nam in the near future. Today, we are of course delighted to welcome to the United Nations the representatives of the Seychelles—like Barbados, a Commonwealth and an island people.

7. It is fitting that I should indicate the commitment of the Government of Barbados to this Organization. We are convinced that continuing dialogue in this forum will eventually lead to solutions to the problems of this world. We are of the opinion that the major international problems have their birth in the denial of fundamental rights and freedoms to individuals and in a lack of real concern about the distribution of wealth among nations. Consequently, in our relations with other States, both within and outside this

forum, we shall support causes which are concerned with the protection of human rights, the rights of self-determination and the fundamental freedoms of any people. In economic matters, our sympathy will be for the under-endowed, underprivileged and underrepresented.

8. Barbados is a very small State, limited in status and power by its size. But there are some things which operate strongly in Barbados' favour. We face no imminent threat of invasion by a more powerful neighbour. We live in a politically stable and socially homogeneous country. We have strong and dynamic social institutions. Our educational system is as good as any. Our religious institutions are alive and outward-looking. Our trade unions are free and alert. In short, Barbados' strength is in the quality of its people.

9. With the support of all Barbadians, the Government is dedicated to trying to find a way towards independence of mind and policy. The Government will embark on an active foreign policy, hoping to strengthen its economic base by strengthening its international links, especially with all Caribbean, Commonwealth and Latin American countries, and with the developing countries as a whole.

10. Our hope of success lies in negotiation and collective action, and one of the main pillars of our hope is this Organization and the specialized agencies to which it has given birth. For this reason, the delegation of Barbados hopes that the work within the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization will contribute to a restructured United Nations system that reflects the configurations of power and the pattern of changes that have taken place since 1945.

11. Matters of war and peace were as crucial in the framing of the Charter of this Organization as they have been in its operation over the past 30 years. The increasing emphasis being placed on matters of economic co-operation and development and on issues related to human rights and freedoms is an indication of the Organization's ability to adapt to the imperatives of the world situation in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

12. Barbados will exert itself to achieve a higher standard of living and a better quality of life, not only for the disadvantaged within its own boundaries, but also for the world's deprived who may be assisted by international co-operation.

13. In respect of the international situation my delegation notes with disquiet the continuing imbalance between the exports and imports of the developing countries, and the failure of these countries as a whole to approach the 7 per cent growth target set in the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade [resolution 2626 (XXV)]. On the other hand, the growing concern of Member countries of this Organization about problems of distribution indicates an awareness within the international community that productivity goals without the moral objective of greater equality are inadequate for the resolution of current international social and economic problems. It is imperative that there be a more equitable distribution of consumption internationally.

14. On the question of the transfer of resources to developing countries, Barbados has been disappointed. The failure of official development assistance to meet the levels targeted in the International Development Strategy has been a major deficiency in the structure of international co-operation for development. The international economic crisis of recent years, accompanied by an apparent disillusionment among donor countries with the results of aid programmes, has led to a widening gap between aid targets and disbursements. It is perhaps understandable that the perceived needs of the poorest of the developing countries have led the international community to give them priority in disbursement of development assistance. However, it seems that the international norms which have guided such decisions are partial and incomplete.

15. The emergence of consultative mechanisms at the international level for determining the need for external assistance of a particular recipient country may ensure some measure of consistency in the treatment of that country. However, the recognition that multilateral and bilateral agencies are acting consistently provides no comfort to the small developing country that finds its requests for external support for its domestic efforts increasingly ignored. What is evident is that the current trend of dividing the developing countries into various groups based on allegedly common characteristics can lead to disturbing results. Indeed, there is a real danger that some donors may adopt the view that, because the needs of some groups of States for concessional assistance are particularly urgent, the needs of others have become less urgent. The dangers inherent in the use of crude classifications for determining relative need of external assistance can be obviated only by the establishment of measures and guidelines which apply uniformly to all developing countries and which take full cognizance of the social as well as structural features of their development prospects.

16. Barbados is hopeful that the attempts to deal with the problems of unequal distribution will soon bear fruit. In this connexion the so-called North-South dialogue taking place in Paris, the Conference on International Economic Co-operation, must attempt to find answers to the problems developing countries are facing in the four broad areas being dealt with by the commissions, that is, those on energy, raw materials, development and financial affairs. We are concerned that the developed countries appear to be set against accepting the principle of "indexation", which we believe to be an important aspect of any mechanism that may be devised to deal with decreases in export earnings from the commodities of our countries. My delegation is convinced that a relationship must be established between the prices we receive for our exports and those we pay for imports; for our economic development prospects are conditioned by the purchasing power of our export earnings. We trust that such arrangements as the compensatory finance facility of the International Monetary Fund and the integrated programme for commodities approved by the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD] at Nairobi will be utilized, after appropriate adaptation to meet the needs of developing countries. Moreover, we hope that some means will be found to redress the cash flow shortage in the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] which has meant a virtual cut-back in aid to some countries—certainly

in such aid to Barbados, where we have had to reduce or close programmes as a result of UNDP shortfalls.

17. Just as man cannot live by bread alone, so for nations growth targets achieved will not by themselves create a better quality of life for all mankind. A well-fed prisoner or a well-groomed slave is not the Barbadian picture of the happy man. For us human dignity and self-respect are paramount. Therefore this delegation is prepared to raise its voice in the support of international action against imperialism of all kinds, colonialism of all types, and racism of all shades.

18. The festering wound of gross social injustice and political and economic inequality within southern Africa remains with us. Perhaps, however, at no previous session was it possible to state with as much confidence as we can today that that wound is beginning to heal. The patience of the black people of southern Africa has been sorely tried. Their fortitude, however, has not wavered, nor has their dignity diminished.

19. Barbados wishes to pay a tribute to the courage of and sacrifice made by black men and women and by black youngsters of southern Africa who have been callously cut off in the bloom of their youth. Let all be assured that their contribution will not be forgotten. Equally, let all be cognizant that, even though brutal and heartless tyranny may postpone the day when this Organization will welcome to its ranks with rousing and endless acclaim and enthusiasm the representatives of a free Namibia and a free Zimbabwe, that day must surely come—sooner, rather than later. Let me parenthetically state that Barbados will not support the sham independence of a Transkei. The tide of freedom is flowing southwards across Africa relentlessly and irresistibly. This tide may be temporarily interrupted or momentarily deflected but it cannot be permanently checked or eternally halted. My delegation, speaking without rancour, without bitterness and without malice, calls upon all nations—especially those whose assistance has in the past made possible the extension and retention of the iniquitous and inequitable empires of southern Africa, and whose economic strength underpins the racist régimes of southern Africa—to exert all efforts to bring about in the near future the demise of racial oppression. Enlightened self-interest suggests it, and objective justice demands it.

20. Barbados notes with pleasure the coming into force earlier this year of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and regards with even more signal pleasure the operation of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That only a handful of nations have found it possible to ratify the Covenants and Protocol is for Barbados a cause of regret and concern. Barbados, as a contracting party—and an early contracting party—to the Covenants, sees them as an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the advancement and development of international order and welfare.

21. The Optional Protocol which offers individuals who are deprived rights and freedoms an opportunity to bring their grievances before an international commission is revolutionary. In this, Barbados is delighted to be

numbered among the revolutionaries. It is our wish that other revolutionaries who often mark the soil more deeply with their footprints because their interests bring them more frequently down revolutionary paths will, in this matter, join us. It is submitted that by the coming into force of those important Covenants the identity of those mysterious inalienable rights adumbrated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations is more likely to be revealed and realized.

22. Barbados will oppose without fear or favour all social conditions which reduce men to the level of playthings of other men. All too frequently, just as stronger nations make playthings of weaker nations, so do men make playthings of women. The Government of Barbados will be stout in its defence of women, nationally and internationally, and will be in the vanguard with those who fight for the promotion and advancement of the rights of women. Nationally, the Government which I have the honour to lead is committed to a new deal and a charter of rights for women, and a national commission on the status of women will be established. In this way my Government will seek to ensure equal opportunity for employment and equal pay for equal work. My Government is pledged to equal access to education and equal scope for intellectual development; and my Government is solemnly resolved to remove all semblances of female second-class citizenship, with regard to property and personal rights.

23. Legislation will fortify practice; equality before the law will enhance equality in the eyes of the people. Internationally, my delegation will set its face like flint against any discrimination on grounds of sex, will actively join in promoting the enjoyment and exercise of civil rights and will participate in any move to achieve the full integration of women in the total development effort. Perhaps a nation like mine, aware of the contribution and merit of mothers and grandmothers, and aware of the intrinsic strength in people traditionally considered weak, understands better than most the importance and potential of women's increasing contribution to the development of friendly relations among States and to the strengthening of world peace.

24. I am sure that speaking to you, Mr. President, of the need to promote, defend and advance the rights of women is mere preaching to the converted. The achievements of the Heads of Government of the great Republics of Sri Lanka and India are well known in our part of the world and they have spurred on the efforts of women everywhere providing, as it were, encouragement and justification for those efforts.

25. As in affairs pertaining to the advancement of women and to the promotion and defence of their rights, so in matters regarding the sea, to outline this delegation's progressive position to you, Mr. President, is like carrying coals to Newcastle. My Latin American colleagues tell me that the modern apt hemispheric expression is *echar peces al mar*—to throw fish into the sea.

26. As far as the law of the sea is concerned, the Government of Barbados is pledged to the extension of its territorial waters from three to 12 miles, in this respect moving moderately with the tide in extending the cover-

eignty of the coastal State over adjacent waters. Barbados also supports the reasonable preservation of the resources of the sea and will continue to participate fully in the Conference on the Law of the Sea. Our aim will be to link our efforts with those of other like-minded nations towards the achievement of a just and reasonable international régime for the sea.

27. Barbados' concept of a just and reasonable arrangement includes access to the resources of the sea and the sea-bed for disadvantaged States, whether the disadvantages be natural—for example, those of being land-locked or shelf-locked—or technological. As in so much of our foreign policy which is a reflection of our domestic policy, the view which Barbados will defend is that the strong must share the burdens of the weak. We are all, as nations and peoples, our brothers' keepers.

28. My delegation therefore subscribes to the view that the sea is jointly owned by the peoples of the world and its resources should be shared fairly and equitably, with a conscious effort to meet the needs of the needy, while utilizing and rewarding reasonably the abilities of the able.

29. In attempting to reconcile the occasionally conflicting interests of the able and the needy, Barbados believes that the demands of the needy are paramount.

30. That the discussions on the law of the sea have been so protracted mirrors the controversial and sensitive nature of the problem and the clash of conflicting self-interest. This delegation does not feel that its intervention in the debate will suddenly resolve the thorny issue. What the representatives of Barbados will bring to the debate, as in all other international issues, will be a measure of good sense, balance and integrity clothed in a willingness to understand contrary viewpoints—with, I admit, a pardonable bias towards the deprived and the disadvantaged.

31. The threat to international law and order assumes many guises. In the Caribbean we have only recently been confronted by the acts of embittered and frustrated persons intent on waging, in the air, a campaign of unbridled terror against innocent travellers. Bombings, hijacking of aircraft and other acts of international piracy are being perpetrated with criminal abandon. The new international assassins now injure the innocent in the same manner as those whom they perceive to be the guilty. The Government of Barbados wishes to register in the strongest possible terms its repugnance to this form of international terrorism and blackmail and calls on all countries to raise their voices against this type of conduct.

32. Less than a week ago my country was indirectly dragged into a dastardly incident of this sort which resulted in a serious loss of human lives. We have already expressed, and do so publicly again, our deep regrets to the Republics of Cuba and Guyana and also the the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for that senseless and tragic act. In collaboration with another small sister country, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, my Government has pursued and will continue to pursue a vigorous investigation of that act of terrorism which caused the total destruction of a Cubana Airlines plane shortly after it left our shores. Within 12 hours of the occurrence our investigations and pursuit had already borne some fruit.

33. We believe that if all the other countries in the world would treat international terrorists with the same determination shown by Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, then this evil would be wiped off the face of the earth. We issue a stern warning to the misguided who would think of involving Barbados in their wicked designs that we consider such acts as instances of gross unfriendliness and that we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to ferret out and punish the perpetrators.

34. We do not believe that the end justifies the means, and that is why we have endorsed the Tokyo, the Hague and the Montreal Conventions. We urge all countries to do likewise without further delay before such acts of air piracy trigger disruption on a universal scale.

35. Barbados will aim through its work within international organizations to soften extreme positions, to emphasize the need for a modicum of morality and justice in international affairs, and to utilize those organizations for the promotion of peaceful initiatives and for the alleviation of social and economic inequality and injustice. This type of undertaking is of course nothing new in this Organization, and perhaps the experienced and the cynical will say, "We have heard it all before; let's hear his tune in 1980". It is by the actions of Barbados and not by the words of its Prime Minister that Barbados will ultimately be judged. It will be a challenge for my island of Barbados to match its deeds over the next years with the words I have spoken on its behalf today. The international challenge is no more daunting than the national challenge.

36. It is a challenge that, as the new Prime Minister of Barbados, I am happy to accept on behalf of the people of Barbados.

37. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, and on my own behalf, I thank the Prime Minister of Barbados, His Excellency the Honourable John M.G.M. Adams, for the important address he has just delivered.

## AGENDA ITEM 9

### General debate (*continued*)

38. Mr. BONGO (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): Speaking for the first time from this rostrum as the representative of a country whose policy is profoundly attached to the noble principles of dialogue and tolerance, a country devoted to universal peace, the self-determination of peoples and their right to development and prosperity in justice and dignity, I cannot refrain from paying a tribute to all those today, dead or living, who have given their best for the foundation and survival of the United Nations. It is therefore with a feeling of deep pride mingled with deep emotion that I speak today before this Assembly. I am moved, I say, because it is in this very same great American city which offers us its hospitality each year, in this same glass palace, the symbol of truth and human solidarity, that is the scene where the fate and destiny of the world in profound change is determined and will continue to be determined, a world which certain sorcerers' apprentices may bring to final catastrophe.

39. I am proud, too, because as the representative of a country that cherishes peace and justice, I should like to state this here on behalf of my country, and particularly on behalf of the Head of State, His Excellency, President of the Gabonese Republic El Hadj Omar Bongo, who from this very rostrum<sup>1</sup> himself proclaimed the firm conviction, indeed the profound faith of the Gabonese Republic in the strength of this international Organization to measure up to the world crisis and to do so in total conformity with the spirit of the Charter. Accordingly, after the minute of meditation and silent prayer which we all observed in this hall at the beginning of this session, I appeal—if there is any need to do so—to all delegations to tackle the problems which confront us with the responsibility, the faith and the determination which the gravity of these questions demands. All the questions with which we shall have to deal in the course of our work will always have as their focal point man himself. Hence our paramount concern must be to guarantee man's physical, moral and spiritual well-being and his total and complete fulfilment.

40. Before turning to the substance of the subject, it is a particular pleasure for me, Mr. President, to convey to you the warm congratulations of my delegation on your unanimous election to the presidency of the thirty-first session of our Assembly. We are convinced that your tried and tested abilities and your exceptional diplomatic qualities will permit you to measure up to the noble and highly delicate task which has been allotted to you. Furthermore, your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly is also a tribute to your great country, Sri Lanka, which recently so brilliantly played host to the important Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. The Gabonese delegation is convinced, Mr. President, that our debates, which have always been distinguished in the past by moderation and restraint, will under your leadership preserve the same character of tranquillity and judiciousness and will be carried on in a spirit of mutual respect, which is the *sine qua non* of the success of meetings as important as those of our Organization, meetings which for three months will be in the spotlight of the attention of the whole world, because they carry with them the hopes of a mankind which has been the victim of its own contradictions, a mankind torn by conflict and consumed by fear, but hungry for peace and thirsty for happiness. The experience which you have accumulated, Mr. President, throughout a long and brilliant political and diplomatic career constitutes, in the view of my delegation, a guarantee of the final success of our work.

41. There is no need, of course, to stress that these congratulations are also extended to the Vice-Presidents and the other officers of the Assembly who play such an important role by your side in the conduct of our debates.

42. I am happy to pay a particularly well deserved tribute to the President of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly for the remarkable work that he did at that session. Mr. Gaston Thorn, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a country which has very good relations with my own, caused

us to marvel at the ceaseless mastery which he displayed throughout the last session, thanks to his perfect command of his role, his consummate skill and his remarkable dynamism. The results of the work of the last session were a striking success, which we attribute to the brilliant qualities of that statesman. I hope that he will find in this the profound expression of our congratulations and of our sincere gratitude.

43. Before turning to the views of my Government on the important items on our agenda, I should like to welcome among us the fraternal State of Seychelles. On behalf of the Gabonese delegation and people, it is my agreeable duty to bid welcome to this new Member of our great United Nations family.

*Mr. Cissoko (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

44. We would have liked at the same time to welcome the fraternal State of Angola and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam among us. We venture to hope that the day is not too far off when these two States, which meet the conditions laid down by the Charter, will be among us. The admission of these two countries will genuinely give our Organization its proper universality.

45. There has been much talk of a world crisis situation, of a universe on the brink of collective suicide and, indeed, crisis and the temptation to collective suicide do undeniably exist, because there is no doubt that whichever way we turn we find war, repression, poverty, hunger, disease, racism in all its forms and the growing disintegration of the world economic order, whose appointed victims are of course the countries which are constructing their economies.

46. We are still living under hegemonism and selfishness of all kinds, phenomena which maintain inequality among men and different parts of the world. We are still living in the reign of hotbeds of tension and explosive situations, of which the most dangerous are, as everyone knows, southern Africa and the Middle East.

47. The peace and security for which we so ardently wish and the justice and happiness for which we so deeply yearn are a common heritage which nature has bequeathed to be shared equally among all men and all peoples on earth. They are not the preserve of any special category of men; they belong to all human beings. To disregard this truth, to deny this obvious fact would lead to frightening consequences and the most bloody tragedies.

48. A mere handful of men of disparate minorities are, on the pretext that they belong to the white race, making life a nightmare for the indigenous majority on this part of our continent.

49. These minorities belong to another age; they are deaf to the voice of all the other nations in the world; they refuse to restore their rights and their freedoms to the peoples which they keep under their domination; this is intolerable and unacceptable.

50. The policy of *apartheid* imposed by these white minorities of South Africa and Rhodesia on the black

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Special Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2210th meeting.

indigenous populations which they have stripped of their rights, their land and their resources is deeply repugnant to the human conscience. Such a reckless and short-sighted policy can only engender hatred, pit the various communities against each other and inexorably lead to violence and chaos. The events which occurred in Soweto and in other South African cities and which are still occurring there are a concrete illustration of this. This tragic situation would never have occurred if the South African authorities had taken the opportunity offered to them in 1969 by independent Africa through the Lusaka Manifesto on Southern Africa.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the Vorster racist régime and its white supporters have remained impervious to reason. They prefer to insist on carrying out their racial policy even at the risk of endangering international peace and security.

51. Gabon firmly condemns the policy of *apartheid* because it is absurd that this policy of the Government of South Africa should continue at the very time when our Organization has affirmed its determination to safeguard human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination. It is absurd that South Africa should continue to belong to our Organization when it is defying the Charter, its principles and United Nations resolutions as well as the public opinion of the whole world. Just as we condemn *apartheid*, so we condemn those countries which for commercial reasons are giving active assistance to this régime in maintaining itself thanks to various kinds of agreements, which thus give the régime the appearance of invincibility.

52. We know that the Vorster racist régime is still deaf to the appeals of the international community that it should see reason. Not only does this notorious régime refuse to change its policy inside South Africa but it has even extended it to Namibia, a Territory under United Nations administration.

53. The situation in Namibia causes us great concern. The Security Council should again take up this problem, which was the subject of its resolution 385 (1976) of 30 January 1976. If South Africa persists in its refusal to withdraw from Namibia—assisted as it is by certain countries—the Security Council should in that case have recourse to the measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of our Organization.

54. We know that a so-called constitutional conference is now going on in Windhoek. Gabon firmly opposes this masquerade, which excludes the South West Africa People's Organization, the authentic and sole representative of the Namibian people. Gabon will also oppose the results of this conference, the only purpose of which is the "bantustanization" of Namibia and the establishment of puppet régimes in the pay of Pretoria.

55. With regard to the problem of Rhodesia, Gabon is following with particular attention the current efforts of Mr. Henry Kissinger, the United States Secretary of State, to find an acceptable solution for this distressing problem. However, there is a sacred principle which is non-negotiable

for the Gabon Government: majority government. So what is necessary is an urgent transfer of power to the representatives of the black majority. The position stated on 26 September by the five front-line African Heads of State should serve as a basis for any negotiation. Gabon for its part will continue to provide material assistance and moral support to the courageous freedom fighters of Zimbabwe until they achieve final victory.

56. On the question of Comoros, we hope that the French Government, which has always shown such wisdom in decolonization matters, will grant this fraternal country its legitimate claim in order to preserve the unity and integrity of its territory just as they were respected in the years of colonization.

57. My delegation is gratified at the process of decolonization which has already been embarked upon in Djibouti with a view to the independence of this Territory in accordance with the aspirations which have so often been expressed by its people.

58. The Middle East today is the most dangerous source of tension. Four frightful wars have caused a heavy loss of human life in that part of the world.

59. The deep reason for that situation is the refusal by the State of Israel to recognize the Palestinian factor. We do not think that there will be peace or détente in that area as long as the Palestinian people remains stripped of its rights. As everyone knows, the Palestinian people, uprooted from its territory, stripped of all its rights to return to its homes and property, is languishing in refugee camps. That people must have a territory, a national territory; it must exercise its rights as a people and as a nation. Any solution that fails to recognize that reality and that fails to provide for direct, full and complete participation by the Palestinian people, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, in all conferences will not be acceptable. Peace in the Middle East cannot be based on the fruits of aggression. Israel must unconditionally withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied by force in 1967.

60. The Lebanese tragedy is of concern to my country, which has always had very good relations with Lebanon. Gabon very sincerely hopes that peace will return to that country. That peace can only be the result of mutual agreement among the Lebanese themselves, without any outside interference. Of course, the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be safeguarded.

61. The Cyprus crisis has, unfortunately, not yet been settled. In spite of the unanimous decisions taken by our Organization, Cyprus is divided into two separate territories, each with its own administration. Gabon firmly supports the efforts of our Secretary-General to find a solution acceptable to all the Cypriot communities, a solution that will safeguard the independence and integrity of the island.

62. Gabon is gratified at the fact that the Korean problem is no longer on our agenda. Gabon, which enjoys friendly relations with the two Korean States, believes that the settlement of the Korean question is to be sought in candid and sincere North-South dialogue, and that that is the most

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes, agenda item 106, document A/7754.

realistic way of enabling the two parties to lay the groundwork for a peaceful solution without outside interference. The Korean question is a matter above all for the Koreans themselves. The role of our Organization is to help the two Korean States to meet again around a conference table in order to achieve the peaceful reunification of their country.

63. With regard to Latin American, I should like to assure the peoples of that continent of the whole-hearted support of Gabon for the efforts they are making to strengthen their national security. For Gabon is convinced that that is one of the most positive contributions to the historic current of the liberation of enslaved peoples.

64. I should like on behalf of my country to extend here our warmest congratulations to the Mexican authorities for having established the Centre for Third-World Economic and Social Studies.

65. If, from a purely political point of view, the picture of the world we have just painted seems to us to be undeniably marked by disorder and disarray, that should surprise no one, because it is a consequence and a logical emanation of an anachronistic world economic system that is itself dominated by disorder.

66. Indeed, that disorder is manifested in different forms, of which inflation, the worsening of the terms of trade, and the constant impoverishment of the third world are just a few examples.

67. That problem is of such concern and so crucial to our countries that it has led to the convening of two special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly to debate the matter and lay the foundations for a new and more just international economic order. Our country, which is a major producer of primary commodities, cannot be indifferent to this situation. Accordingly, the President of the Republic of Gabon, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, took an active part in the laying down of the guidelines for this new economic order, which from now on should take the greatest account of the interests of the primary-commodity-producing countries. And, in order the better to defend those interests, our country and other partners, following the example of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, have just established the Organization of Timber Producing and Exporting Countries.

68. Within the world structure of relations there is no sphere more manifestly saturated with inequalities, unilateral advantages and lop-sided contracts than the sphere of economic relations.

69. Indeed, if we look at the world scene we see that about 80 per cent of world trade and about 95 per cent of private investment are controlled by a minority of States, while more than two thirds of the world's population continues to live in conditions of poverty.

70. We believe that the time has gone by when the international economic system was directed by that minority. We believe that the time has gone by when the will of that minority was imposed upon the majority.

71. We think that economic relations should be based upon new factors: interdependence, international solidarity, absolute sovereignty over primary commodities, the setting of prices for primary commodities at equitable and remunerative rates by producers, and active and respected participation by the developing countries in international economic negotiations.

72. Wilful disregard of those factors by the affluent countries is putting a brake on the actual establishment of the new international economic order, as defined and accepted by the international community during the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly of our Organization. That bad will on the part of the developed countries is also at the basis of the partial failure of the fourth session of UNCTAD, in which the developing countries had placed so much hope.

73. The overcoming of the present economic crisis is a fundamental goal with a high priority. There can be no question of returning to a past which everyone acknowledges has been superseded.

74. The problem of under-development will be genuinely solved only if the developed countries manage to overcome their selfishness, which is at the basis of the poverty of the third-world countries.

75. The former relations of domination and dependence must give way to the legitimate interests of the vast majority of the international community. Any partial solutions or solutions that would take account of the interests only of the minority could not be supported. Solutions must be global and must be in keeping with the urgent needs of all the peoples of the world.

76. If there is one subject which is of the greatest interest with regard to the economy, development and sovereignty of nations, it is the subject of the ocean.

77. Although its importance is not matched by any great interest on the part of the public at large, it remains crucial for contemporary needs, as indeed it has been crucial throughout the history of mankind. The ocean occupies 71 per cent of the earth's surface and is an inexhaustible source of wealth. Its role in the life of mankind has become particularly great in the past 10 years. That is why Gabon is following with very close attention the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

78. We recognize that the problem of the oceans is very important and very complex, and that any hasty solution in this area is unacceptable. The Conference must take account of the legitimate interests of coastal States as well as the aspirations of land-locked States.

79. Gabon wishes to encourage the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea to continue its work until it produces an international treaty on the subject.

80. The elimination of hotbeds of war and the settlement of all armed conflicts which are dividing nations constitute the first stage on the way to peace and security. The peoples of the world can live in peace only if they have a true sense of security untroubled by threats. When we

realize that the military arsenals of the great Powers are each day being swollen by ever newer weapons, ever more sophisticated and improved weapons, ever more powerful and deadly weapons, when we realize that many developing countries are themselves embarking on an arms race—as an example, according to the Institute for Strategic Studies, the countries of Asia are devoting to the arms race about 1.9 per cent of their gross national product and those of Africa about 5.3 per cent—our minds are clouded by doubt. Are the great Powers which play such a decisive role in the affairs of the world and are the only ones producing these arms and responsible for their dissemination really sincere and consistent when they speak of peace and call for disarmament?

81. The attitude of those merchants of weapons makes us doubt it. In the face of the risks to international peace and security posed by the production, accumulation and reckless distribution of armaments, it is becoming necessary to combat the folly of some in order to guarantee the security of others.

82. At a time when the threat of hunger is a reality to so many millions of people, vast amounts of money are being spent on the work of destruction. The gross indifference of the weapons merchants, the tranquil assurance of the buyers and sellers at a time when the business of supplying food to countries suffering from hunger poses such difficult problems, is something to cause us concern. The statistics of the World Bank show that in 1970 the world spent \$183 billion on armaments—some 24 times the total amount allocated for aid programmes. Military expenditure is rising by about 6 per cent a year, so that the growth of the forces of destruction is greater than that of the total production of all the goods and services in the world. We can therefore see that, in spite of speeches and conferences on disarmament, the international arms market has never been so prosperous.

83. It is therefore the duty of our Organization to step up its efforts and its actions in this area in order to prevail upon Member States to reach an agreement which would lead to general and controlled disarmament.

84. But the Government of Gabon is always wondering what can be the purpose of the bombs already stockpiled before the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII)*].

85. In order to assuage our fears and to give a satisfactory reply to all countries which dream only of peace, there is only one solution, and that is the solemn, formal banning of the production of new nuclear weapons and the immediate formation of international commissions under the aegis of the United Nations that will embark upon the systematic destruction of existing stockpiles. To us, failure to agree to that simply means the shirking of a sincere search for peace.

86. In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm here our unswerving faith in the United Nations. In spite of the difficulties in which our Organization finds itself, we hope that the international community will continue its efforts to make of the United Nations an indispensable instrument

for the building of a just and peaceful world order. Gabon, for its part, is ready to make its own modest contribution to the realization of this noble ideal. Long live the United Nations!

87. Mr. ADAMOU (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): I should like on behalf of my delegation to convey to Ambassador Amerasinghe our most sincere congratulations on his election as President of the thirty-first regular session of the General Assembly.

88. May I also be permitted to reiterate the warmest congratulations of my delegation to his outstanding predecessor, Mr. Gaston Thorn.

89. The thirty-first regular session of our General Assembly is taking place at a time when the world is still deeply affected by the death of one of the most distinguished statesmen to leave their imprint on the twentieth century, Chairman Mao Tsetung. My delegation wishes yet again to pay a sincere tribute to the memory of the helmsman of the Chinese people who made it possible for his country to become a modern, free and respected nation. The peoples of the third world will always be grateful for his constant unreserved support of their fight for liberation. The principle he taught, that one must rely first and foremost on one's own resources, has become a slogan for the Chinese people and a source of inspiration for the nations of the third world.

90. At a time when the majority of States of our international community are confronted with serious problems of development, we believe it is important to highlight that principle, so true is it that it is through their own daily collective endeavours and common will to overcome disease, illiteracy and hunger that the developing countries can hope to achieve social well-being while safeguarding their dignity and independence, which can be real only if they have been won.

91. Desirous of achieving that kind of independence, the Government of Niger, under the enlightened leadership of His Excellency, Lt. Col. Seyni Kountché, has bent every effort to mobilize all the vital forces of the nation to build a new Niger and at last ensure the happiness of each and every one of its citizens.

92. That mobilization has been carried out in particular by traditional youth associations called samarias, which, by channelling all their efforts, undertake joint mutual assistance and development activities at the town and village levels. Their dynamic and responsible action has made it possible, *inter alia*, to build in less than a year about 2,000 classrooms, something the First Republic had been unable to do in 15 years of independence. After six long years of drought and cruel trials and tribulations, we are more determined than ever to persevere in this, the only true course of freedom and source of development. Thus we have placed all our hopes in the three-year development plan, which upon completion should enable us, in particular, to raise the rate of school attendance from 12 per cent to 35 per cent and to move towards agricultural self-sufficiency.

93. A retrospective look at the months that have elapsed since the thirtieth session will show certain disappointing



facts and events that have left their imprint on international life. Once again we deplore the fact that the world we live in is still faced with serious problems endangering international peace and security. Be it the unbridled arms race, the numerous cases of infringement of the sovereignty and integrity of States, the Middle East crisis, the explosive situation in southern Africa, or worrisome economic problems, our General Assembly must at the current session assume fully its responsibilities and find appropriate and just solutions to those problems.

94. But before dwelling on these burning questions, I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to applaud the admission to our Organization of the sister Republic of Seychelles. As great as our joy at welcoming that new State in our midst, so great is our disappointment at the non-admission of the People's Republic of Angola and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as a result of the abuse of the right of veto. Niger, which supports the principle of the universality of the United Nations, emphatically denounces this attitude, for which there is no justification in any of the provisions of the Charter.

95. With regard, first of all, to the People's Republic of Angola, we believe that it is doubly unjust to keep that country outside our Organization: on the one hand, that country is a member of the Organization of African Unity [OAU], which has given it its full confidence; and, on the other, that same nation has been recognized by over two thirds of the United Nations membership.

96. As for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, my delegation feels itself in duty bound to emphasize that that State, which only recently regained its national unity and territorial integrity after more than 30 years of a cruel and bloody war that marked its brave people profoundly, deserves that our Organization should do it justice at last, not only by admitting it to membership but also by helping it to heal its wounds.

97. This abuse of the right of veto leads us to believe that there is an urgent need to amend the Charter in order that some of its machinery may be brought more into line with the reality of our time, which is characterized by a more marked desire to introduce a certain degree of democratization into international relations.

98. One of the most difficult tests to be withstood by our Organization in the forthcoming years is that of the unbridled arms race, which has reached alarming proportions in some countries. Thus it is that the report of the Secretary-General [A/31/1/Add.1] stresses that over \$300 billion is spent annually for that purpose, whereas three quarters of mankind live in poverty and despair. That arms race is one of the greatest scandals of our time, because the world is in the process of manufacturing the instruments of its own destruction. The list of those that have it in their power to blow us all to kingdom come grows longer and longer as time goes by. Even Africa, which was expected after decolonization to make development its primary objective, is also arming itself dangerously.

99. The various disasters that have struck the world, such as earthquakes, tidal waves and droughts, and that have caused so many victims, should bring us all to greater wisdom.

100. My country believes that our Organization should accord special importance to that question before it is too late. Its objective should be the realization of general and complete disarmament, the only solution that can prevent the total disintegration of our planet. A special general conference on development, were it to be convened, would be the ideal framework for the serious consideration of that objective. We therefore fully support such an initiative.

101. Another source of concern is to be found in the countless cases noted here and there of interference in the internal affairs of other States. We regard such interference as true acts of terrorism and a permanent source of conflict in international relations.

102. For our part, I can say that ours is a peace-loving people, an advocate of human brotherhood. But I must also add most emphatically that we shall always remain obdurate where our sovereignty and dignity are concerned, because no one can love or stand up for our fatherland better than ourselves.

103. In the Middle East, too, the situation has in no way improved. Israel still persists in its refusal to restore to the Arab States the territories it has unlawfully occupied since the June 1967 war, despite Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Niger, for its part, denounces and condemns most strongly the policy of aggression and expansion undertaken by Israel in the region. It is for this reason, and in conformity with the relevant aforementioned resolutions of the United Nations, that we vigorously reaffirm that any settlement of the Middle East crisis necessarily entails the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, and its recognition of the legitimate, inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a homeland. Therefore, we shall continue to hold the Zionist State of Israel alone responsible today for that situation.

104. As for the serious and sad tragedy besetting Lebanon today, it is, in our view, the result of that permanent crisis which has reigned throughout the Middle East since the birth of the Hebrew State. We exhort all the parties involved in that country to show greater moderation and wisdom in order to put an end to that war which has already claimed too many innocent victims. Thus we firmly support the laudable efforts made by the League of Arab States in its search for a peaceful political solution to this painful problem.

105. Elsewhere in the world, there are other thorny problems which could, unfortunately, lead to fratricidal confrontations. I am referring, *inter alia*, to the situation prevailing in Cyprus and in Korea. Although our General Assembly decided this year no longer to deal with the Korean problem, it still remains a concrete reality which we cannot continue to evade indefinitely in so far as it represents a definite threat not only to stability in the Asian continent but also to peace throughout the world. In Niger, our view is still that it is for the two parties concerned to seek, through dialogue and without outside interference, ways and means which will lead to a just and peaceful settlement of their dispute, a settlement that will be lasting only if it leads to the reunification of the two Koreas.

106. With regard to Cyprus, we deplore the events that have rent that island asunder, and it is for this reason that my country firmly supports the action of the Secretary-General of the United Nations aimed at restoring peace and security in that part of the world.

107. However, it is the events in southern Africa which today constitute the most sordid and most repugnant drama of all. In fact, we cannot but deplore the fact that our Assembly has been powerless to put an end to the racist South African policy ever since this question was included on our agenda for the first time in 1951.

108. Twenty-five years have elapsed without the international community making the slightest change in the arrogant and defiant attitude of the colonialist and racist authorities in Pretoria. Not only has the heinous policy of *apartheid* been entrenched as an almost inexpugnable state institution, but it is in the process of being transplanted to the neighbouring Territories of Namibia and of Rhodesia. The question that arises for the conscience of mankind is whether our Assembly today is in a position to checkmate the insane determination and senseless conspiracy of a handful of unenlightened white settlers who wish to see their retrograde dreams become a reality.

109. Everything seems to have been said again and again for the past 25 years concerning that situation. Our Organization today appears to be tired of vainly condemning at each of its sessions one of its obstinate Members which appears to be more determined than ever not to implement its decisions. This continued defiance by South Africa of the United Nations cannot but undermine our Organization.

110. Niger believes that the time has come for our Organization and, more particularly, for certain States to put an end to their complicity before the policy of fait accompli carried on by the Government of South Africa, and that the time has come to embark, at last, upon a complete and swift consideration of the question of southern Africa, because too much blood has already been shed on our continent. Perhaps it is time for us to ponder the old adage that hatred brings forth hatred and blood calls for blood.

111. Hundreds of young black Africans died in Soweto and other South African ghettos while confronting with bare hands the bullets of the racist criminals. Africa's reaction to this massacre, so revolting to the world conscience, was its spontaneous, unanimous condemnation of it. In addition, on the occasion of their summit conference in Mauritius, the Heads of State and Government of (OAU)<sup>3</sup> decided that each year the date of 16 June shall be commemorated throughout the African continent as the Day of Martyrs.

112. How much longer will our Assembly tolerate the bloody exactions and daily crimes perpetrated by that accursed, shameful régime?

113. We believe that the time has come to take decisions.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-seventh ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Port Louis, Mauritius, from 24 June to 3 July 1976.

114. As for the Namibian question, in respect of which our Organization has given proof of its impotence, I had occasion to stress before the Security Council<sup>4</sup> the imperative need to envisage today very seriously the application of measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter, the only measures capable of permitting our Organization to assume fully its responsibilities over that Territory.

115. As for Rhodesia and South Africa, we must recognize that only the direct application of majority rule should prevail. This is the reason why Niger will not oppose any initiative, from wherever it may come, provided that its ultimate aim is the strict application of that rule and that it take into account at all times the recommendations of OAU, one of whose fundamental objectives is precisely the liberation of the entire African continent.

116. I appeal to the conscience and logic of some of the great Powers, those which, in one way or another, support the survival of a system that they themselves reject.

117. I advisedly decided to dwell on these burning questions, some of which seriously endanger international peace and security. However, we are also well aware of the economic crisis rampant in the world today, the nefarious effects of which are deeply felt by the poorer countries, among them my own.

118. An analysis of the international economic situation leaves no room for optimism. In fact, the inflationary situation which has affected the world for the past three years remains an important factor in the decline of the world economy, above all in the non-oil-exporting developing countries. In our view, this factor—rather facile to recall whenever there is an economic crisis—is far from justifying by itself the ever more serious difficulties faced by our countries. This is, perhaps, an appropriate time to denounce not only the tendency to blame it all on a circumstantial—albeit serious—event, but also, and above all, the deliberate absence of political will on the part of the industrialized countries increasingly concerned with not-too-honourable preoccupations that generally run counter to the objectives of the Charter, such as the arms race which I have denounced earlier.

119. What has become of the United Nations Strategy for the Second Development Decade—a whole ingenious mechanism of operation and assessment, which was drawn up with such ardour and detail? Like all human constructions, it soon became obsolete, and scepticism prevails each time that we consult the very meagre results at the end of each year. There are many industrialized countries which have not yet accepted the transfer of 1 per cent of their gross national product to the developing countries. Thus, we must note that the lack of financial resources prevailed over the enormous hopes for development that were aroused throughout the developing world.

120. The same problem of the transfer of resources is to be found everywhere as the key to any development aid programme. We saw this in Nairobi at a time when UNCTAD felt it necessary to create a buffer stocks fund. The mitigated, even hostile, acceptance by some countries

<sup>4</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, 1959th meeting*

did not lead to optimism, and, as everywhere else, when it is a question of the transfer of resources, the same vicious circle appears, accompanied by heated statements, by votes and by compromise solutions where the essential part of the recommendations are left out of any decisions.

121. The countries of the third world without oil resources continue to live in the most precarious economic situation. The deficit in their balance of payments in 1976 reached \$US 45.2 billion. This exorbitant figure represents a growing trend, and if nothing stops this upward trend between now and 1980, most of the countries concerned will cease to participate in world trade. Moreover, no one is unaware of the fact that the financial resources of those same countries are exhausted or, more particularly, that they are increasingly obliged to resort to borrowing in order to ensure some continuity in their investments. We must believe that, if this is the price of development, very few developing countries will be in the race by the year 1980.

122. My country will never cease to denounce most forcefully the world economic order as it exists. In this confrontation between the powerful and the weak we know what our fate will be. This scandal to which so many nations are still attached persists despite resolutions adopted here and there. The promise of a gesture towards more balanced co-operation as provided for in the objectives of the Second Development Decade has, regrettably, found only timid accomplishment. In our view, although there are plenty of good intentions everywhere there still remains to be carried out a deliberate, courageous political action which would induce the rich nations to fulfil their contracts and commitments with those on which, often, they have based their own development.

123. A ray of hope shone for a moment at Lomé: nine Western European countries instituted a stabilizing system for export earnings for the benefit of 46 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The policy and the evolution of relations between the rich and the poor countries had led us to expect better prospects for the future. Many had hoped that this machinery would be enlarged and improved and consequently would have an effect on the linkage between prices of manufactured goods and commodities, but nothing happened. The world must once again take note of the fact that the new world economic order has its price. Whichever way we approach it, the essential thing is to accept the idea and facilitate its application.

124. The countries of the third world want their non-manufactured products to receive a fair remuneration. They are aware that their development depends essentially on those products and that any transfer of financial resources can only be a supplement.

125. The international situation, as we together with most of the previous speakers from the third world have noted, leaves very little hope for a solution of our development problems. However, we shall not be discouraged. With our neighbors alone or jointly with those that share our ideals of solidarity and devotion to development, we have undertaken local and regional actions to benefit our peoples. Among these I shall mention only the Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, whose actions

have made it possible in the first stage to save the lives of thousands of human beings and on which we rely for the establishment of the necessary economic arrangements to avert the prolonged effects of such disasters. To all those countries which have helped us we wish to express again our sincere gratitude.

126. Outside the regional sphere, we made a point of being present at the meeting of solidarity of the third world at the Colombo Conference. On that occasion the Head of State of Niger, Lt. Col. Seyni Kountché, when speaking of the dynamics of non-alignment said the following:

"Let us conceive formulas for mutual assistance in order to avoid accepting the generosity of the two blocs, because, just as water that comes from the same source cannot be both salt and fresh, so we cannot expect to maintain non-alignment while we are attached to others."

127. The fifth session of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was concluded only a few weeks ago. Without advocating scepticism, the least one can say of that session is that it achieved no positive results.

128. We may search for the reasons for this semi-failure in the difficulties inherent in the establishment of an international convention; but we cannot conceal the fact that there are too many interests involved, whether admitted or otherwise. The obstacles encountered during the fifth session stem particularly from the hegemonic desires of some and the egotism of others.

129. My country, Niger, which is a land-locked State, must point out that its good relations with its coastal neighbours make its geographical position less hard to bear.

130. However, as regards the elaboration of a convention to govern at the international level the rights and duties of the States parties, we could not accept a text which does not recognize to land-locked or disadvantaged States the right of free access to and from the sea.

131. Similarly, we could not remain silent as regards the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed, which are the common heritage of mankind. Those resources should be used for the harmonious development of the international community as a whole, and that result cannot be achieved if the authority and the enterprise to which all States are to belong do not have the appropriate legal and financial means for that purpose.

132. However, we all know that there are other things involved besides direct economic interests which hamper the progress of the work of that Conference. The sharing of the oceans is part of international military strategy. The great marine spaces, like outer space, have become privileged territory where man is beginning to establish his bases for the launching of weapons of destruction.

133. Another ominous subject of tension must be pointed out: it is the gap that divides us from the great Powers. We speak of development, but on the other side they think of strategy and hegemony with all its retinue of provisions which seek to keep the planet in a state of terror.

134. For the small countries which seek development the United Nations is a very important instrument on which we have based our hopes for peace and freedom, and we believe it will for long remain the privileged place, the meeting place, where we can achieve consensus and where progressively it will be possible to do away with injustice, inequality and egotism among nations and among men. In this connexion we note with satisfaction the considerable work accomplished by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who identifies himself more and more with our struggles, our hopes for equity and the faith we have in this institution. My delegation was happy at the summit conference of OAU<sup>5</sup> to present to the Heads of State and Government a recommendation expressing sincere congratulations and a profound recognition of the remarkable task accomplished.

135. The intentions of my country are sincere, and our preoccupation is still development. Around us reasons for satisfaction are rare; but, despite these disappointments and perplexities, my delegation sincerely hopes that we shall soon see an era of pooling of views leading to the establishment of a new world order of peace and tolerance.

136. Mr. GAYOOM (Maldives): The election of Ambassador Amerasinghe as President of the thirty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly is indeed a recognition by the world body of his eminent qualities of leadership, wisdom and conference diplomacy that he has demonstrated so well in his outstanding career in the international arena. It is also an acknowledgement, as he has stated, of the positive role that his country, Sri Lanka, has been playing in world affairs under the inspiring leadership of his Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. On behalf of my delegation, I extend to Ambassador Amerasinghe our sincere congratulations and assure him our full support and co-operation at all times. We are particularly happy to see him in the Chair because his country is our closest neighbour, with which so many historical and cultural ties unite us and with which we have enjoyed very fruitful links of economic co-operation for the past several decades.

137. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Maldives, I should like to express our deep appreciation of the man who has been directing, with such efficiency and skill, the executive machinery of the United Nations for the past five years, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. His dedication to the cause of peace and his vision, courage and impartiality at all times have earned him the respect of the entire international community.

138. On the occasion of the admission of the Republic of Seychelles to the United Nations, may I also extend our warm greetings to its delegation. The Maldives looks forward to the establishment of cordial relations with the newly independent State.

139. Since this is the first time that a representative of my country has had the honour of addressing the General Assembly for some years, allow me to convey to the

President, the Secretary-General and the representatives the greetings of my President, His Excellency Amir Ibrahim Nasir, and his best wishes for the success of these deliberations.

140. On this occasion, I should also like to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Maldives to the purposes and ideals of the United Nations. We are convinced that the United Nations system, despite its shortcomings, has been and still is the most important instrument the family of nations has so far evolved for the maintenance of peace and security in the world, and for the promotion of the principles of freedom, justice and human dignity. In its 30 years of existence, the United Nations has accomplished much, especially in the process of decolonization and in the development of peaceful co-operation in many fields of international relations, in addition to peace-keeping operations in many troubled areas. We believe that the United Nations remains the best hope for a better world.

141. We firmly support the call for the strengthening of the United Nations system in order to increase the effectiveness of its role in the pressing political and economic issues that face us today. A first step in this direction would be the implementation of the principle of universality of its membership. We feel that no sovereign State should be barred from membership in the United Nations.

142. We are acutely aware that the non-implementation of its resolutions is weakening the very foundations on which the authority of the United Nations is based. We believe that it is the collective duty of all Member States to find ways and means which will ensure that the resolution and decisions of both the Security Council and the General Assembly are respected and implemented.

143. The primary concern of my Government is to improve the living conditions of our people. The Maldives is one of the smallest Member States in the United Nations. The most serious impediments to our social and economic development are our meagre natural resources and the extreme fragmentation of our sprawling clusters of islands which stretch over an area of approximately 100,000 square kilometres in the Indian Ocean.

144. Until very recently, almost 90 per cent of our national income had been dependent on the fishing industry. Our efforts to find other sources of revenue have resulted in the establishment in recent years of some exchange-earning industries, the most promising of which has turned out to be tourism. The tropical beauty and the calm serenity of the sun-drenched islands have made the Maldives a country with tremendous potential for a flourishing tourist industry.

145. So far the Maldives has depended solely on its own resources, however limited they may be, for its economic and social development. We are rightly proud of the fact that we have been able to achieve, under the dynamic leadership of our youthful President and by our policy of "development through self-reliance", a measure of success that others may find hard to believe. But owing to the nature and urgency of our development needs, combined

<sup>5</sup> Thirteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Port Louis, Mauritius, from 2 to 5 July 1976.

with the hard economic realities of our times, we find at the present stage of our growth that external assistance and co-operation are of vital importance for our continued progress. We have been fortunate indeed to receive bilateral assistance in some areas of our development programme. We fully agree with the Foreign Minister of Australia that "the best and most acceptable aid is that which eliminates the need for its own continuation" [9th meeting, para. 173].

146. The stability of our own area is crucial to our political and economic well-being. For that reason the Maldives fully endorses General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), which declares the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, free from great-Power rivalry and conflict. We believe that the implementation of that Declaration is essential to the true independence and security of the States of the region. In this connexion, we welcome the statement made before this Assembly a few days ago by the Foreign Minister of the USSR [7th meeting] that the Soviet Union had no intention of building military bases in the Indian Ocean.

147. The Maldives has noted with deep satisfaction the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan, with both of which we enjoy very close and fruitful relations.

148. The Fifth Conference of non-aligned countries held in Colombo in August of this year was of special significance to us, since at that Conference the Maldives became a full member of the non-aligned group. We have joined the non-aligned movement as a result of our conviction that this movement embodies not only the legitimate aspirations of two thirds of the world's entire population, but also of mankind's search for peace and harmony among nations. In our perception, non-alignment is a constructive force that strives for the establishment of a new international economic and political order based on justice and equity.

149. The non-aligned movement is not a new political bloc, as so lucidly explained to this august Assembly only a few days ago by Mr. Amerasinghe's Prime Minister and the current Chairman of the group of the non-aligned countries [11th meeting]. By becoming a member of the movement, no country loses its right to formulate its own domestic or external policies according to the political will of its own people. The Maldives, as a Moslem country with its own cultural heritage on which no foreign culture has ever made its imprint over the centuries, has its own fundamental values by which it interprets the principles of liberty, democracy and social justice.

150. The Middle East is a region with which the Maldives has always had very strong traditional links. It is a matter of deep concern for us that no positive steps have been taken since the last session of the General Assembly in the search for a just and lasting peace in the area.

151. The Maldives reaffirms its solidarity with the Arab countries in their struggle to liberate their occupied lands. We firmly support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their legitimate right to establish a homeland on their own national soil. We are convinced that a just and durable peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through a comprehensive settlement based on

Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem and other Islamic Holy Places in Palestine, and the immediate restoration to the Palestinian people of all their national rights in accordance with the numerous resolutions adopted by this Assembly.

152. The situation in southern Africa continues to constitute a threat to the peace and security of the region. We in the Maldives strongly object to the policy of *apartheid* and racial discrimination, since it violates all fundamental human values. We emphasize the need for the total and speedy eradication of *apartheid* and for the exercise, by the South African people, of their legitimate right to self-determination.

153. We denounce South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. We call for the immediate transfer of power to the people of Namibia under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with Security Council resolutions 264 (1969), 269 (1969) and 366 (1974).

154. We firmly endorse the right of the African people of Zimbabwe to self-determination and independence. We welcome the recent diplomatic initiative of the United States to find an equitable solution. Mr. Kissinger is a man of great diplomatic skill, as he has proved in so many critical situations. His efforts will no doubt make a positive contribution towards a just and durable settlement. But we fully agree with the front-line African States that the prime objective in Zimbabwe should be the immediate introduction of majority rule.

155. The Maldives supports all efforts made in the search for a negotiated settlement to the problem of Cyprus. We hail the continued efforts of the Secretary-General to promote talks between the parties directly concerned that would, hopefully, pave the way to a peaceful solution. We feel that any realistic solution to the problem should take into account the legitimate interests of both the Greek and Turkish communities, and that it should preserve the independence and the territorial integrity of Cyprus.

156. We in the Maldives remain deeply disturbed over the continued presence of foreign military forces on the Comorian island of Mayotte. In accordance with the resolutions adopted at the Seventh Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Istanbul in May [see A/31/237] and at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo [see A/31/197, annex IV] we call for the immediate withdrawal of those forces.

157. The problem of disarmament has become of prime importance to all countries in the world, big and small. In the words of our Secretary-General, "the problem of armaments continues to present the most serious threat to a peaceful and orderly future for the world community". It is time that a comprehensive programme of agreed measures for the opening of a process of genuine disarmament is worked out.

158. The Maldives, being a maritime nation, attaches great importance to the deliberations of the Law of the Sea Conference, which has had the good fortune of meeting

under the leadership of Mr. Amerasinghe. We believe that the work of the conference has reached such a crucial stage that great patience and flexibility on the part of all the participants have become essential for the successful conclusion of the negotiations. On the positive side, the Maldives welcomes the consensus reached on such key issues as the 12-mile territorial sea and 200-mile economic zone.

159. In this session of the General Assembly, as in many previous ones, we are faced with a multitude of crucial issues. The success or failure of our deliberations will largely depend on the manner in which we deal with them. If we, collectively, have the political will and the moral strength to face the challenges of our times with dedication and courage, success will be within our reach. If we lack

that collective will or that moral strength, our efforts may turn out to be an exercise in futility.

160. In conclusion, let me repeat these inspiring words of the Secretary-General in the introduction to his report:

"Our efforts to make the United Nations work will inevitably contain a measure both of hope and of frustration, of achievement and of failure. In the long run only the dedication of the Members to the ideals and objectives of the Charter, and their persistence in working to realize those ideals and objectives... will be the decisive factor in the success or failure of this great experiment." [A/31/1/Add.1, sect. I.]

*The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.*