



President: Mr. Paul J. F. LUSAKA
(Zambia).

AGENDA ITEM 139

Critical economic situation in Africa (*continued*)

1. Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): The economic crisis in Africa, which has been the subject of debate in the General Assembly for some days now, has been declared to be the most serious in its history. It is deep-rooted and far-reaching, but, depending on the countries and regions involved, does not spring from the same causes or manifest itself in the same ways. Its solution requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels. By virtue of the interdependence of the economies of the developed and developing countries, this crisis could have serious repercussions on the world economy and, in particular, on the process of international trade.

2. What is the cause of this crisis? This is a very complicated question which requires a lengthy, detailed reply. The causes are numerous. Some of them, whether we know about them or not, we do not have sufficient technical and material means to cope with. My delegation cannot simplify this problem by blaming this crisis on Africa's historical past or by assigning the responsibility for it on any particular party.

3. My task would be an easy one were I simply to lay the blame for the fact that Rwanda is land-locked or lacks natural resources on some country or on our historical past, but it must be recognized that the situation is much more complex than that. The causes of the crisis are structural and relate to the present situation.

4. It has also been said that the difficulties besetting the African economy are, for the most part, due to unsuitable policies or the absence of any structural reform. Although this is true, it is far from the whole truth about our problems. Each of our countries applies the economic policies which it deems most appropriate to its own social, economic and geographical context. Each Government carries out reforms taking into account the needs of the day. In some cases, for example, agriculture has been modernized and diversified, whereas elsewhere industries have been revamped; and in other cases distribution networks have been reorganized or extended. In every case an attempt is being made to satisfy the most urgent needs of the people. I would also emphasize that in most if not all of the African countries, the people is the instrument of its own

development—although it is sometimes believed by onlookers that it is the Governments that carry out this development—even if the role of the Government is irreplaceable, particularly in planning for development, providing the necessary funds and organizing, guiding and training the people.

5. Africa is potentially a rich continent, perhaps even the richest, but by an irony of fate it is the least developed. If we are to be realistic and objective, we must seek the causes of the present economic problems partly in the international economic environment—which, as we all know, is extremely unfavourable for the developing countries in general—but also in Africa itself.

6. I do not intend to expatiate on the external factors; they are too well known to the Assembly for that to be necessary. Suffice it to indicate some obstacles and problems which my country, Rwanda, shares with a number of other African countries. I have already mentioned its land-locked condition and its shortage of natural resources, but there are also the phenomena of desertification and drought.

7. The largest deserts are in Africa, but the Sahara and the Kalahari are confined to the northern and southern parts of the continent. However, today other regions have been affected. I shall not refer specifically to the Sahel, which will be dealt with this afternoon by my friend the representative of Niger in terms both eloquent and moving. Other countries are now threatened by desertification which is advancing by 2 million hectares a year. To the extent that it is man-made, desertification can perhaps be controlled, and African Governments have sounded the alarm among their peoples. But desertification is also covered by factors beyond our control, and it is here that international solidarity should come into play on seeking a long-term solution.

8. Together with desertification, drought is creating catastrophic food shortages which often became a famine situation, such as that which is now, unhappily, to be found in Ethiopia.

9. My country, Rwanda, which was known for the perpetual green of its vegetation and its networks of waterways, today is facing an inexplicable phenomenon. The levels of certain rivers are dropping and some lakes are disappearing. The pattern of rainfall has completely changed in many parts of Africa. Where previously it was abundant, rain now falls less and less frequently or out of season, causing serious disturbances in the crop cycles. To this we should add the fact that in certain regions where the land has been exploited for a long time the soil is exhausted and the yields are decreasing. When this happens in a small country such as Rwanda, where the demographic growth rate is greater than the growth rate of production, even the most peaceable peoples have cause for alarm.

10. Misfortunes never come singly. This year we have seen in Rwanda a fall in the production of food crops of more than 60 per cent. The Secretary-General refers to this in his report [A/39/594]. We will not say anything about the fall in industrial output—in tea, pyrethrum, quinine and coffee, which provide approximately 80 per cent of our foreign currency earnings.

11. I have referred to some of our problems, and I would have liked to describe in a few words the efforts which we are making in Rwanda—because this is the country I am most familiar with. If those efforts are to yield the expected results, continued and intensified international solidarity is necessary. Suffice it to say, in connection with the phenomenon of deforestation and without again mentioning desertification, that a few years ago the Government launched a vast national campaign for the reforestation of our hills. The last Saturday in October each year is what we call “tree day” and every Rwandan citizen has to plant at least one tree. The diplomatic corps accredited to Rwanda joins in this exercise and we consider this a sign of active solidarity. This action, in itself a piecemeal one, has since 1974 been part of a vast operation called *umunganda*, which in our language means the voluntary physical contribution of each citizen to the collective realization of a project of common interest. It is through this kind of operation that Rwanda has been able and can continue to carry out a certain number of projects, particularly for the protection of its soil.

12. I felt I had to say this because if today we appeal for international solidarity we also have to demonstrate if only in outline, that our countries, too, are making efforts. When our efforts reach their limits, we call upon the solidarity of the international community, which, it must be acknowledged, has generally speaking lent an attentive ear to our appeals. It must also be recognized that the advice, expertise and material and other resources provided within the framework of bilateral or multilateral co-operation have been fully utilized by our countries, even if here and there there have been certain regrettable omissions.

13. When a country is underdeveloped, it is underdeveloped in many different ways. That is why it would be difficult to establish the priorities among the needs of Africa at the present time. The indications provided by the Secretary-General in his note to the General Assembly [A/39/627], which are fully supported by my delegation, are sufficient. I take this opportunity to express the gratitude of my Government to the Secretary-General for his constant attention to Rwanda's problems and for the beneficial action of the United Nations family of specialized agencies in favour of Africa.

14. We particularly welcome what has been done in the field by ECA under the wise and enlightened leadership of Adebayo Adediji, who is at the same time in charge of the Nairobi office which, as the Assembly knows, follows on a daily basis the development of the economic and social crisis which is the subject of this debate.

15. We are pleased and satisfied by the statements of a number of countries concerning heartening initiatives and promises to step up their efforts to help Africa in its present economic crisis. These initiatives and promises will be followed up either bilaterally or on a regional or subregional basis.

16. There is no doubt that particular attention is claimed by the whole problem of balance of payments, because a shortage of export earnings creates a chain of concomitant problems, including the crucial one of indebtedness. Regarding debt, we were very pleased to hear the proposals made by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean [see A/39/118, annex], which met at the Latin American Economic Conference at Quito in January 1984 and proposed a dialogue between creditors and debtors, both private and bilateral or multilateral.

17. The problems of education and health, which are among the most urgent ones, deserve the greatest possible attention by the international community. The problem of new and renewable sources of energy is also deserving of special attention, particularly as regards the least developed countries and those threatened by the phenomenon of desertification. It is necessary to strengthen the machinery of subregional and regional co-operation and to increase agricultural production capabilities, build up food buffer stocks and improve distribution services.

18. We also welcome the proposal made by France that a special fund for Africa be established, as well as the new substantial action programme of the World Bank to assist Africa. We hope that effect will be given to these two initiatives and that they will be followed by many others, thus making it possible for Africa to resolve at least part of its problems, particularly at a time when access to credits from private banks has been made particularly difficult by the very onerous conditions imposed on our countries. We also welcome the efforts and promises made by the European Economic Community.

19. The declaration which is going to be adopted unanimously—we hope—will provide a framework for action by the international community which will make it possible for Africa to overcome the greatest economic crisis in its history. As for short-term remedies, these are definitely needed in many cases, but we must consider more radical remedies, because this is a deep-rooted, generalized crisis.

20. Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to express my satisfaction at the inclusion on the agenda of the thirty-ninth session of an item on the critical economic and social situation faced by the African countries. We hope that the debate will lead to ideas, proposals and decisions aimed at finding practical short-, medium- and long-term solutions to that serious situation.

21. We agree with those who believe that the present economic crisis has structural roots. The implacable plunder over almost four centuries of the most valuable of the resources of Africa—its young men and women—to take them elsewhere as slaves left an indelible mark on African development. When the institution of slavery was abolished on the American continent, the plunder of Africa's resources became more wide-ranging and intensive. This was at the beginning of the struggle between the major capitalist Powers of the time to control and exploit those natural resources. That process culminated in the Berlin Conference of 1884 and the distribution of the whole continent among the former colonial Powers. During that period the desire of foreign interests to gain profits was the main reason for the presence of the colonialist Powers in those lands, which laid the foundations for the dependence

and vulnerability which still affect the economies of the African countries.

22. Almost a century of colonial domination bequeathed at the time of independence distorted economic structures producing cheap raw materials intended to meet the needs of the metropolitan countries, with no thought for the economic and social needs of the African peoples. This has had a profound impact on the levels of economic, technical and social development of the continent.

23. No great strides have been made towards solving the problems of the distortion of the economies of most African countries, a task which naturally became the primary objective of the independent States of that continent. Despite the efforts that have been made, the great resistance put up by those that bear the major historical responsibility for the present situation cannot be concealed. That has so far prevented the adoption of substantive measures that would permit the African countries to create the conditions in which they could attain the increased levels of economic development necessary for progress on the path to the restructuring and diversification of their economies.

24. In analysing the economic problems and the food crisis in Africa we cannot fail to stress the need to lay the foundations for a definitive solution, which can be found only through a change in the existing unjust international economic order, the elimination of inequitable terms of trade, a guarantee of fair prices for raw material, serious work in accordance with the goals of the International Development Strategy, just treatment of the external debt problems and the manifestation of the political will to initiate global negotiations with a view to establishing the new international economic order.

25. The present international economic crisis has had its worst effects on the peoples of the underdeveloped countries and has accounted for a reduction in the rate of economic growth, which in many cases has become negative. The African countries and all the other countries that are members of the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have spoken of the urgent need to adopt immediate economic measures in international relations to make it possible at least to mitigate this serious situation, which is becoming worse day by day and which increasingly affects the development of all—in particular, those with the most vulnerable economies. However, once again the corresponding political will on the other side has been lacking. Natural disasters, the prolonged drought and desertification have contributed to making the crisis even worse in several African countries, for whose benefit we must mobilize resources without further delay.

26. We hope that our debates here will lead to a greater awareness of the need to make all the necessary efforts in order to alleviate the critical situation in many African countries and give them more effective assistance. What is needed in particular is emergency aid—food supplies and technical resources and the transport to get them to the populations concerned—to meet the immediate requirements of the situation, for tens of thousands of human beings, mainly children, are dying in that continent, and several million are in danger of the same fate. However, we must also attach the greatest importance to mobilizing resources to create the economic base, so that the African countries may in

future develop their main productive sectors and the necessary infrastructure for the appropriate use of their natural resources and the raising of the standard of living of their peoples.

27. Here we emphasize the need to follow the path of the just restructuring of international economic relations so as to find a lasting solution and create conditions that will prevent the recurrence of situations such as that which we are examining today, or at least prevent their effects from being so disastrous.

28. We followed closely the priority treatment given to the critical situation in Africa by the Economic and Social Council at its second session of 1984. We have also studied the Secretary-General's report [A/39/408] on co-operation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, which was requested by the General Assembly in resolution 38/160. In this connection, we support the Lusaka Declaration of April 1980¹ and the political plans reflected in it. We join in the appeal of the African countries to the international community to support implementation of the measures outlined in the Lagos Plan of Action² and in the Special Memorandum on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis,³ adopted at Addis Ababa on 28 May 1984 by the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

29. The programmes and projects which, with the assistance of the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, are being carried out in various economic and social sectors in African countries are an example of the efforts of the international community to support the decision of those countries to achieve economic development and to meet the growing needs of their peoples, but we agree with the African countries that it is necessary to adopt urgent measures at the international level to support the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action to Combat the Effects of Drought in Africa and the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.⁴

30. Permit me to cite some ideas contained in the book entitled *The Economic and Social Crisis of the Third World*, by President Fidel Castro, which are particularly relevant to the item we are discussing:

"The existence of vast masses of hungry and undernourished people in the world is an affront to all mankind. We must find a stable and permanent solution to this serious problem.

"We must fight, with international assistance, for the development of plans with the objective of each country's becoming as self-sufficient as possible in foodstuffs; to create an awareness of the inevitable need, if we wish to defeat rural hunger, unemployment and underemployment, to bring about far-reaching socio-economic and structural changes, such as agrarian reform, to make possible the adoption of better forms of agricultural production; and to promote, also with international co-operation, programmes to combat erosion, desertification, deforestation and other forms of soil degradation, protecting the main sources of water in each country and creating new reserves by the use of dams and other means."

31. I wish to assure the Assembly that our country, within the limit of its modest means, will continue to accord assistance to the brother peoples of Africa and will associate itself with the efforts of the international community to bring about a true climate of

international co-operation which permits effective action to ensure the survival of millions of human beings in that continent.

32. Mr. ESSY (Ivory Coast) (*interpretation from French*): The proliferation today of specific reports on Africa prepared by the various agencies of the United Nations system within their respective areas of competence is a reflection of the deep disquiet of the international community over the grave situation of the African economy. The Secretary-General, who has initiated no less than a crusade, first in Africa and then in the developed countries, on the specific problems of Africa, has succeeded in alerting the international community, which today has discovered with dismay the extent of the terrible poverty suffered by Africa. For some States, even harder hit by natural calamities the problem is a question no longer of development but rather one of survival, for in order to develop it is necessary first to exist.

33. The world is discovering today something which we Africans foresaw years ago, not simply through instinct but because of the facts and the daily realities of our struggle for development. An African proverb says quite aptly: "You cannot see sweat on the face of a man who is labouring in the rain." Obviously in this particular case "rain" should be construed to mean the deluge of problems, namely, those of debt, exchange rates, deterioration of the terms of trade, interest rates and so on.

34. Quite apart from temporary causes such as, for example, drought, it is difficult to see how our countries can end their underdevelopment if they are not fairly recompensed for their efforts to achieve agricultural and industrial development. How can they pay back the loans they have taken out to build factories if the output of those factories continues to be refused or has extremely limited access to the markets of the lender countries? Since our working and development budgets are supported by our export earnings and from year to year the prices of coffee, cocoa, copper and iron, to name but a few, are falling steadily, whereas from year to year the prices of a cup of coffee, a chocolate bar and an iron girder are rising rapidly, how are our countries to service even existing investments, when they have no idea of the prices at which they will be able to sell their products, even assuming that they find customers? How can they envisage modernizing their methods of production if they do not know what their money will be worth, what interest rates will be, or what profit they will make?

35. The background of the problem concerning us at present is the poverty which began in the 1970s and which has now become generalized inasmuch as all the industrialized countries, whether in the East or in the West, have always refused to pay remunerative prices for our raw materials, whether agricultural or mineral. The first factor of poverty to a large extent proceeds from that unequal exchange.

36. We in the Ivory Coast know that the development of our States depends above all upon agriculture. After all, the history of our economic relations has taught us that it was through agriculture that the industrialized countries of today were able to lay the greater part of the foundations for their development. It was the financial surplus provided by agriculture which made possible the financing of the industrial infrastructure.

37. Thus the real key to development is still agriculture. That is why in the Ivory Coast we have made the farmer the real hero of the development battle, for in the final analysis it is on him that our economic development depends. The awarding of a national progress trophy each year by the head of State to the best farmer, selected by a national committee on the basis of predetermined criteria, is a telling illustration of how we see the fundamental and catalytic role of agriculture in the struggle for development and the consolidation of our independence, two factors we regard as going hand in hand.

38. The question of self-sufficiency in food, which everyone realizes is absolutely essential, is not simply a matter of combating starvation. As we see it, it is a matter of balancing external accounts, developing the territory and controlling urbanization; but it is particularly a matter of further consolidating our political independence, to the extent that it is recognized that a country that is starving can hardly be either peaceful or independent.

39. The excellent reports of the Secretary-General, the various statements in the Second Committee by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and the specific study by ECA entitled "ECA and Africa's Development 1983-2008: A preliminary perspective study", as well as the three reports of the World Bank on sub-Saharan Africa, provide us not only with complete statistics on all sectors of the African economy but also with a detailed analysis of the causes of the difficulties and the long-term problems, as well as proposals for reforms and measures to cope with the present situation.

40. The figures given in these reports, whether in reference to the evolution of prices of raw materials, trade, industry or the net flow of capital towards Africa, are all rather significant and lead to the same conclusion, one shared by all who have spoken before me: that we must take specific, urgent steps to face the alarming situation which exists and that a series of substantial actions must be taken at the international level to attack the structural problems by carrying out specific programmes of action at different levels to resolve long-term problems, as is clear from experience acquired in preceding decades of co-operation.

41. We welcome the series of emergency actions launched in various areas in order to face the problem of the famine resulting from drought, which has just been the subject of a debate culminating in the adoption of an appropriate draft resolution [A/C.2/39/L.54] in the Second Committee. We hope that within the framework of co-operation the food problem will henceforth receive the high priority it deserves in the agricultural sector and that the development of food crops and agricultural research will constitute the mainstays of all strategies for the economic development of Africa and consequently receive the appropriate financing they need.

42. The lesson which we must learn from the present world economic crisis, with its particularly tragic consequences for Africa, is that in context of economic relations we must establish a dialogue based on solidarity, because the solution to our present problems can only be the result of joint North-South efforts. Increased exports by the industrialized countries are inconceivable without growth in the developing countries, and at the same time the

growth of the third world is linked with the access of its goods to the markets of the developed countries.

43. The success of the undertaking which we are discussing today quite obviously implies that we must continue and increase international aid. Despite the present difficult situation, the reports of financial institutions have acknowledged the substantial efforts made by African States for some years now in carrying out the structural adjustment programmes necessary for the revival of production. In the light of these efforts we are entitled to expect the firm support of the international community in the form of appropriate, stable assistance.

44. We are living in a world of violence and anxiety. The disastrous experiences of the past led to enslavement and the mutilation of the human personality. We believe that in the light of past experience we can now make an effort to avoid those errors and make it possible for Africa, with its acknowledged enormous potential, to bring to the world through its development the benefits of its age-old wisdom and give it new reason to believe in the durability and greatness of the human race.

45. Mr. IJZOON (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to express, on behalf of the delegation of my country, our appreciation of the General Assembly's decision, at the request of the Economic and Social Council, to include this item on the agenda of the present session and to consider it in the plenary Assembly.

Mr. Oramas Oliva (Cuba), Vice-President, took the Chair.

46. The interest shown by the United Nations and its subsidiary organs and by Member States in this question shows clear recognition of the need for effective international co-operation and solidarity in assisting the African peoples which have suffered for many years from both natural and economic difficulties. These harsh difficulties are referred to by the Secretary-General in his note [A/39/627] and by his Special Representative in his analysis of the situation [see A/39/594] after having visited the African countries concerned. These documents describe clearly the current critical economic situation in Africa, that immense and important continent which has always played such a significant role in the development, survival and well-being of mankind because of its privileged geographical position, its enormous area, its history and its many natural resources, in particular its agricultural resources.

47. Unfortunately, there are signs of pessimism and concern regarding the present economic situation in the north, the south, the east, the west and the center of Africa, and the problems caused by desertification and drought are increasing year by year. To this must be added declining production of food crops and diminishing water, energy, natural and other resources in most of the African continent. The increasing number of refugees and displaced persons and the emergence of problems connected with the transport, storage, distribution and declining volume of foreign aid should also be mentioned, as should the considerable increase in the foreign debt and the shortage of foreign investment. At a time when we note with profound regret the death of a number of people of some African States from hunger, thirst and the lack of medical care, we also see increasing amounts going to the competition to spend hundreds

of billions of dollars on the arms race and other means of destruction.

48. The reduction in per capita income of certain African countries and peoples has reached its lowest level ever because of the increase in unemployment, the growth of the foreign debt and the stagnation of exports. All this is a *fait accompli* and makes it necessary for the donor countries to furnish further material and financial assistance without delay. The two sides have no choice but to work together effectively to prevent further exacerbation of the critical economic situation in Africa and make it possible for the peoples and the countries of Africa to achieve their legitimate aspirations to establish a firm structure of collective development so that that great continent may deserve to be called the breadbasket of the world.

49. The Sultanate of Oman, which has age-old historical ties with most African countries, in particular the East African countries, and an axiom of whose foreign policy it is to strengthen those relations with Africa, has always appreciated the importance of support for all the peoples and countries of Africa in all forums and fields, particularly at a time like the present when they are facing difficult natural and economic conditions.

50. Oman, like its brother members of the Co-operation Council of Arab Gulf States, is convinced of the need to strive sincerely and effectively to provide all the aid demanded by its humanitarian duty to our African brothers and friends, both bilaterally and multilaterally, directly and indirectly. The establishment of the programme of the Gulf States in support of United Nations development activities will be a practical sign of our good will.

51. We quite agree with the choices of the African States as reflected in the Lomé Convention and the Lagos Plan of Action, just as we associate ourselves with the comments of the Secretary-General, who, at the end of the note already referred to, said that at a time when the African States were determined to shoulder the responsibility for their own destiny the African peoples had need of all of us because "their trials are ours too and it is together that we shall overcome them".

52. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The serious situation existing among the brother countries of the African continent is of concern to us in Ecuador, as it is of concern to all of Latin America. To the hard circumstances brought about by the world-wide inflation and the prevailing crisis, we must now add serious scourges of nature, such as drought in some cases, and floodings in others. The disturbing result of all of this is the continuous and growing advance of the desert which detracts from arable land and from means of subsistence for human beings.

53. We have studied with great interest the Secretary-General's report [A/39/594], which mentions the recent decision of the Economic and Social Council to request the General Assembly to include the item of the serious economic situation in Africa in its deliberations, as it reviews the emergency situation and the activities for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the countries affected by drought, which depend on food aid. This interest is based not only on the natural feeling of brotherhood among countries of the developing world, but also on the fact that we understand better the tragedy of Africa at a time

when our country, Ecuador, has suffered from scourges of nature which, together with the world-wide crisis, have resulted in a considerable reduction in crops for human consumption and for export.

54. That is why we have also studied with alarm the analysis by the Economic and Social Council of the situation in 36 countries of Africa and the clear mention of disquieting problems, such as the lack of food and water for human and animal consumption, serious livestock losses, the impact of this on the costs of transport, storage and distribution of available food, the diseases brought about by scarcities, population displacements, currents of migration of refugees, and unemployment in general.

55. Furthermore, we see what the impact on national economies is of the growing external debt of the African region, which has exceeded the level of \$150 billion, in addition to the deterioration in trade and increase in interest rates, destruction of the vegetation cover and the depletion of the subsurface aquifers. Together with this we have the reckless destruction of forests, the population explosion, poor health conditions, malnutrition and insufficient energy, shelter and clothing.

56. The documents which we have been receiving from the Secretary-General on special situations in African countries, about cases which deserve urgent attention, have revealed in greater detail the seriousness of the African problem in general. The formulation by Governments of specific action projects on water supply and on economic recovery in general has placed the problem in a technical framework and in feasible processes, if adequate financing can be obtained and if urgent action is taken.

57. The situation in Africa has tested the service capacity of world organizations, as well as that of development programmes, lending institutions and private organizations. Also, it has tested the efficacy of bilateral humanitarian assistance, which has been significant in many cases but which as a whole has fallen short.

58. Ecuador has supported all actions recommended to assist the African peoples in facing the serious problem in the Economic and Social Council, as well as through UNDP and WFP. We have also encouraged the activities of UNFPA, whose positive work is considerable and is viable in the context of African problems.

59. It has been encouraging to note the capacity of many African Governments to respond to the challenge of the crisis. They have had to increase their staff of skilled manpower and to generate additional resources for the public sector for purposes of social action. They have also had to tailor their planning and development goals to the exceptional circumstances brought about by crisis, drought, desertification and hunger.

60. In that regard the work of the Resident Coordinators, the Resident Representatives of UNDP, has been notably timely and useful. They have been able to mobilize the entire United Nations system in concrete programmes of rehabilitation in the field. The operations of UNDRO have been tested in emergency programmes and in the response to the blows of nature. For such disasters it was created.

61. One aspect of work which is on the increase is the expansion of food storage facilities in remote rural areas. Another aspect on which we are ready to co-operate, and we are co-operating in fact, with

African countries, is in the area of South-South services, and of course also in the action of technical co-operation among developing countries, a new dimension which is not merely an ideal but which is broadly operative.

62. But the scope of the problem of the African peoples is such that all of this is not sufficient. In the world in which we live, however, resources exist which could assist the world community in facing the African crisis, if we took seriously and with political responsibility the wish of peoples to divert funds now being devoted to an arms buildup to purposes of development. To attain this goal—and it can no longer be postponed—the reactivation of world development should begin with Africa.

63. In view of the above, we wish to express the solidarity of the people and Government of Ecuador with the peoples and Governments of Africa in this time of serious crisis when their economies must be reactivated, as clearly stated in the Secretary-General's thorough analysis of the situation. We must all do more than we have done so far, and those who are able should provide more resources in order to restore the world balance, beginning with the most affected area, Africa. The Governments of the major industrialized countries and the international lending institutions, which have begun to act in this area, must show greater decisiveness and arrive at more concrete results. This debate could be the necessary spur to reach that end.

64. We have heard many encouraging voices, among them the expressions of resolve of the African countries themselves to do everything within their means, despite their limited resources. The areas of priority for international action, pointed out by the Secretary-General in his note [A/39/627], are clearly expressed. The path to action has been shown; the task is difficult but not impossible. The only thing lacking is the political will necessary to turn purposes into reality. In such a case the members of the international community will be complying with their commitment under the Charter of the United Nations in serving, at their hour of greatest need, our brothers in Africa.

65. Mr. CHARLES (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to avail myself of the opportunity provided by the debate to testify to the solidarity of my country with Africa, which is so deeply committed to a relentless struggle for its development. We Haitians have always regarded Africa as the land our origin, with which Haiti will always be linked by race, culture, traditions and shared suffering. But today, as the world becomes ever smaller, Africa and Haiti are once again side by side, both motivated by an equal need for development in order to improve the living conditions of their communities. This solidarity is rooted in history, but at the same time it is in the very nature of things.

66. As in the case of Africa, it is in an atmosphere of serious natural restraints—soil, climate, the pressure of demographic growth, the consequent reduction of resources, inadequacy of output, lack of foreign currency and budgetary deficits—that my country is pursuing its own development efforts.

67. During the last 10 years Haiti has developed its infrastructure considerably, particularly its roads and telecommunications. It has produced a flourishing small-industry sector and improved the management of its public finances. But a great deal remains to be

done in developing human resources, and also in agriculture, where output is inadequate to meet both a satisfactory export threshold and at the same time a steadily growing domestic need for consumer food-stuffs. With the combined affect of the drop in volume and often in value of exports, the share of agriculture in total exports has diminished considerably, which has served only to aggravate the earning gap between town and country, provoking an alarming migration from the inner part of the country to the coastal towns and recently even beyond our borders.

68. Judging by the Lagos Plan of Action, the Special Memorandum on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers, and the World Bank IMF joint programme of action for the sustained development of sub-Saharan Africa, it appears that it is not only the symptoms in this crisis which are common to Africa and Haiti, but also to a large extent the causes, the effects and the remedies.

69. In both cases it should be observed that the prospects for growth are very unpromising, as indicated by the continuous decline in the level of per capita income, a constant deterioration in the external payments position, unremunerative prices for commodities and the unceasing growth of protectionism, which can only hamper the success of any efforts to carry out the kind of structural adjustments to which an ever-growing number of developing countries have committed themselves. It is clear that the liberalization of world trade, as well as a wider access by developing countries to sources of public financing, will be fully effective only if they are accompanied by a noticeable improvement in national policies.

70. It is therefore a supporting role which falls to the international community. Nevertheless, such a role is by no means unimportant. While a comprehensive analysis of the respective strengths and weaknesses of our economies, the rational ordering of our priorities, the defining of necessary support policies, the establishment of investment programmes and the choice of projects themselves remain the prerogative of our Governments, it is none the less true that the guarantee of adequate and lasting external financing to carry them out is an indispensable factor. Likewise an appropriate framework is desirable if there is to be a sustained dialogue in order to ensure that the results are kept in line with the targets while constantly adapting the means available.

71. It is in a combination of national development policies and an international environment with greater focus on its long-term ambitions than on its transitory concerns that, as I see it, we can find the key to success.

72. The debate and the consensus which seems to have emerged from what has been said by the developed and developing countries appear to indicate that the specific dimensions of the African problem are well known to everyone, but that over and above the case of Africa what is quite evident is the growing need for fundamental rethinking about a better balanced structuring of economic relations between nations in today's world. We are entitled to congratulate ourselves on the fact that the debate is contributing to that rethinking, and we owe this in

large measure to the exemplary way in which the President is conducting our work.

73. Mr. KNIPPING VICTORIA (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): International life today presents a series of contradictions that are difficult to understand. We thus see that, while what might be termed incredible progress has been made in the sphere of science and technology, transport and communications, industry and space research, medicine and health and so on, at the same time situations arise of such disconcerting nature that they necessarily lead us to think that something is not working well in the present structure of the international order.

74. These contrasts, which can be seen at all levels, can be observed more clearly in the ever-widening gulf between rich countries and developing countries, despite such scientific and material progress and especially in the threat of the spectre of hunger to many millions of people. These contrasts, which sometimes come to our attention, are reaching tragic and alarming proportions.

75. The Dominican Republic is a developing country which at present is facing serious economic difficulties. Its Government is firmly determined to overcome them and is taking the necessary steps to that end. Despite this situation, and despite its current limitations, my Government could not let this opportunity go by without expressing its full solidarity with and support for the intensive efforts being made by African countries to face this enormous and serious economic situation.

76. However, despite the extraordinary efforts made by the African countries themselves, because of the magnitude and seriousness of the crisis those efforts have not been sufficient. Indeed, in the Secretary-General's report [A/39/594] we can see that the situation throughout Africa is truly alarming. There is a real emergency in that continent, mainly taking the form of a persistent drought which has led to the deterioration and loss of agricultural soil, the destruction of the vegetation cover, desertification of pastureland, depletion of groundwater, deforestation, massive displacement of populations and distortion of the ecological system.

77. All of these factors have had an impact on certain social problems, such as food, agriculture, transport, energy, nutrition, water and others which are equally important for the survival of mankind. To this distressing picture must be added the fall in prices for export commodities, the growing protectionism of the industrialized countries, the enormous burden of the external debt and increases in interest rates.

78. The combination of natural disasters and an unfavourable international economic situation has worsened the African crisis, with manifestations at all economic and social levels in the African continent.

79. The Secretary-General's report also shows that the international community and the United Nations system are at present lending generous assistance to African countries in meeting this critical situation. To ensure the effective application of the aid received, there must be fluid co-ordination between the African Governments themselves, the donor countries and the international organizations. Here we must highlight the valuable contribution made in this crusade against underdevelopment by FAO, WHO.

WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and other specialized organs of the United Nations.

80. Nevertheless, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, the situation in Africa continues to be precarious. There is a need for more co-ordinated efforts, not only to resolve current emergency needs, but also to formulate coherent programmes of rehabilitation and social development. In this extraordinary long-term effort, African Governments will present and devise the necessary projects and programmes in accordance with their own legitimate national interests, which must be coupled with sufficient support by the international community. It is also necessary for the developed countries to direct their actions in accordance with a new philosophical concept of international co-operation.

81. The present crisis is a tremendous challenge for the international community, since it is of such alarming scope that it could strain the capacity of the international community to respond. My delegation therefore believes that this debate should lead to a clear expression of political will and a clear commitment to come to the aid of Africa. It must result in an effective plan of action, of concrete measures aimed at the economic and social development of the African peoples. Through these measures, in addition to promoting social progress and raising the standard of living within a broader concept of human solidarity, we would also be lending invaluable service to the cause of peace, since we must understand that peace is not only the absence of war but also the outcome of international social justice.

82. The delegation of the Dominican Republic wishes to reiterate its solidarity with the brother peoples of Africa and to state that it stands ready to co-operate actively so that the Assembly may arrive at appropriate formulas to help resolve the present crisis.

83. Mr. HERRERA CÁCERES (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The inclusion in the agenda and discussion of the item on the critical economic situation in Africa reflects the serious economic and social difficulties now faced by our African brothers, made worse by natural and human phenomena, and stresses the urgent need for concrete measures by the international community in support of actions undertaken internally by those countries in seeking a solution to their difficulties. In view of this situation, Honduras takes part in this debate because it cannot, nor should it, remain indifferent to it.

84. Honduras cannot remain indifferent to the serious concerns which today afflict our brothers in the African continent because we know the disastrous impact of the present crisis on its socio-economic structures. It is the case in many developing countries. We know this because Honduras is one of the least developed countries in Latin America and is part of a subregion where economic adversity has been joined by political adversity. In this respect ECLA stated, in a study made this year:

"Central America offers a tragic picture attributable to the depth of the economic crisis, to which must be added, as is specifically the case in Latin America, a serious political crisis. Between 13 and 23 years of material well-being have been lost. Perhaps even more serious is the fact that indicators of internal savings and investment have fallen by half in only six years, thus seriously jeopardizing the future capacity for development." Conse-

quently, Honduras cannot remain indifferent to the seriousness and urgency, indeed the tragedy, of the situation in Africa. That is why today we express our deep solidarity with that continent.

85. Nor can Honduras remain indifferent to this debate, because we would not wish non-participation in it to be interpreted to mean that we have any reservations—the kind of reservations that some think are shown when co-operation is directed towards one or another of the various regions of the world. We have never shared that opinion, because we feel that it tends to weaken solidarity among the developing countries and because we have seen that this opinion results in the limitation of the effective use of the potential for co-operation that should be made available to all.

86. It should be recalled that a few years ago the United Nations entrusted certain high-level international personalities with the undertaking of a broad study on the world economy. One of the objectives was to ascertain whether the disparity of 10 to 1 between the income level of the developed countries and that of the developing countries could be reduced by half before the year 2000, based on known resources. Those personalities reached the conclusion that that was possible technologically speaking, without doing any serious damage to the environment, and they pointed out that the major obstacles to sustained economic growth and accelerated development were political, social and institutional in nature. Subsequent studies have also confirmed that such growth depends largely on the economic possibilities of the industrialized countries.

87. This shows that the international community, and in particular the developed countries and the international financial institutions, must immediately give urgent, concrete and effective support to the efforts of the African countries to solve the short-, medium- and long-term multisectoral problems. That would be in keeping with an enlightened international approach to world development based on international stability. In that perspective, it is to be hoped that there will be the will and action for co-operation which as a minimum will ensure to other developing countries as well the additional support needed to attain an annual average growth rate of 7 per cent, as proposed in the International Development Strategy.

88. Hence Honduras believes the concrete support that should be given as soon as possible to our African brothers is support for global economic equality and, above all, for human well-being—and no one should have any hesitation or uncertainty about the need for that.

89. We have heard and read with special attention previous statements made on this item; we have also analysed the diagnoses and the warnings about the dangers that could lead to even greater problems in the African economy. On 31 August this year, there were 36 African countries in a situation of emergency, of which 27 have been identified by the FAO-WFP group as having extraordinary food deficits. And the tenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, held at Addis Ababa in May 1984, stated that the other nine countries were victims of drought.

90. Faced with that picture, we can only associate ourselves with those who have called for action instead of words. We would remind all the developed and the developing States which cherish the commitments assumed under the International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights" [see resolution 2200A (XXI), annex, preamble]. Let us also recall that, under the Covenant, each State party to it undertook to

"take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures". [Ibid., Part II, art. 2, para. 1.]

91. Let us recall, moreover, that even when international co-operation is based on free consent, the essential importance of such co-operation is recognized as being the enjoyment by human beings of a decent standard of living, of protection against hunger, of education and of physical and mental health. Thus, the co-operation that Africa requires must go hand in hand with the efforts to ensure the implementation of human rights, already enshrined universally.

92. Several delegations from developed and developing countries have referred to their bilateral co-operation with some African countries. We should like to see such co-operation, as well as that of international organizations, intensified as part of a scheme of concerted action within a strategy that would prevail over unilateral, haphazard measures—without, of course, prejudicing the emergency assistance that is required.

93. Honduras, within the context of co-operation with the developing countries, also seeks possibilities of triangular co-operation with the States that are parties to the Lomé Convention and, to that end, intends to take and encourage initiatives within the framework of the new structure of economic dialogue between Central America and the European Communities—a structure established on 29 September this year during the ministerial meeting at San José, Costa Rica. Honduras joins in the decision for multilateral co-operation for the benefit of all the African countries, and wishes to ensure viable methods of bilateral co-operation based on trade exchanges and on experience in the production and marketing of commodities and in basic training for development.

94. In view of all that, our delegation reaffirms its solidarity with brother African countries and confirms the part of the ministerial declaration of the Group of 77 of 28 September [A/39/536, annex], which urged the international community, and particularly the developed countries and the international financial institutions, to adopt and implement concrete, effective measures to support the efforts of the African countries.

95. To that end, we welcome the proposals for the establishment of a functional group to formulate an effective and co-ordinated plan of action and to take immediate measures in response to the priorities of the present crisis in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region. We also share the conviction that the resources allocated to programmes in Africa should

be re-oriented, in consultation with the African Governments, to serve the priority areas identified.

96. In brief, we concur with the Secretary-General when he says:

"The time has come to move from words to deeds . . . the peoples of Africa need us: their trials are ours too and it is together that we shall overcome them." [See A/39/627, para. 19.]

97. In view of the above, we support the adoption by consensus of the draft declaration on the critical economic situation in Africa, which joins as the fundamental ingredient, the major responsibility that each country bears in the fight for its own development and the appeal for complementary contributions which the international community can make towards that goal.

98. Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh). The catastrophe which has befallen nearly 200 million people in 36 countries in Africa, particularly in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, has aroused global concern and sympathy. We have read with serious concern dispatches from Africa published in various newspapers here. *The New York Times* of 4 November 1984 carried a paragraph which read:

"Acute famine is killing people in unknown numbers not only in Ethiopia in the east, whose plight is receiving worldwide attention and therefore a measure of relief. With far less heed being paid to their distress, people are also dying in Chad, in the center of the continent, and in Mozambique in the southeast. Pockets of famine are also thought to exist in Rwanda, Zambia and Angola, but information channels from Africa are feeble, and the truth may never be known."

99. This realization of the acuteness of the crisis, the regrettable slowness of which allowed an enormous loss in terms of human suffering, has by now developed into a consensus for meeting the desperate immediate needs of these countries. It is to be noted that individual donor countries have increased their food assistance and that pledged food aid covers almost 90 per cent of the emergency requirements. My delegation welcomes this but wishes to stress the equally if not more important aspect of disbursement and distribution. The logistical complexity of getting emergency aid to the needy in time can hardly be over-emphasized. It is also important to bear in mind that considering the lingering drought, this emergency is likely to intensify in the coming months. The report of the Secretary-General [A/39/594] underlines the fact that greater efforts will be required during 1984 and 1985. It is imperative that this should be borne in mind in responding to the emergency needs in Africa.

100. The crisis in Africa has not been a sudden development; it has been building for years. Nor is it the consequence of only drought and desertification. On the contrary, in a situation of adversity encompassing major aspects of the economies of these countries, the natural phenomenon of drought dealt the final blow.

101. In many of these countries, agricultural production witnessed a consistent decline, and their per capita food output fell at an average rate of 0.9 per cent during the entire period of 1967 to 1982. The Secretary-General's report points out that for the region as a whole the per capita value-added production in agriculture declined by more than 1.5 per cent per annum. I may recall here that not long ago, Africa

was a food surplus continent, and the experts calculate that most of these countries have the potential to feed at least their present population.

102. The negative agricultural export performance, a consequence of the setback in agricultural production, requires increased food imports. Real export earnings from crops and livestock declined by 2 per cent per annum in the 1970s. The fall in commodity prices dealt a severe blow to the economies of these countries. All of their principal commodities—coffee, cocoa and copper, to name a few—suffered a consistent decline. The purchasing power of the African countries from exporting agricultural commodities has decreased by about 40 per cent since 1973. The price of copper is now lower than at any time in nearly 40 years.

103. Our attention has been drawn to the worsening terms of trade for the African countries, which declined by more than 50 per cent between 1977 and 1981. It has been calculated that the annual loss of external resources because of this deterioration is equivalent to their total aid receipts. Naturally, the insufficient export earnings have added to their difficulties, particularly in servicing their debt. Even worse, their debt-servicing ratio is likely to increase dramatically. The debt service obligation of the sub-Saharan countries was projected to increase by 60 per cent in 1983.

104. In a situation as serious as this, the net disbursement of official development assistance for sub-Saharan Africa experienced a decline in 1982. I may also add here that the largest concentration of the least developed countries—26 of them—are in Africa. Their extremely vulnerable economies do not need further elaboration here.

105. The environmental degradation has had particularly serious consequences for the African countries in loss of agricultural soils, destruction of vegetation cover, desertification of pasture lands and depletion of groundwater. The dimension of the problem can be imagined from the fact that advancing desertification in Africa has been claiming about 2 million hectares every year, particularly in view of the delicate ecosystem that exists in Africa. Added to this is the difficult problem of population growth faced by most of the African countries. The disaster that this situation bodes for the future can only be imagined. Perhaps the urgency for restoring a balance between development, resources, environment and population is nowhere more acute than in Africa today.

106. All this illustrates that the solution for the African problem cannot be achieved overnight merely by emergency relief assistance. It will require painstaking efforts both by the affected countries themselves and by the international community. We would like to emphasize that it will have to encompass adequate measures to meet the short-, medium- and long-term requirements. The relief assistance, essential as it is, must not overshadow the development requirements of these countries. The Secretary-General's report provides a comprehensive perspective of such requirements.

107. We are heartened to note the growing consciousness of the international community, as reflected in our debate, on the subject of the long-term perspective for the solution of economic problems in Africa. A new Lomé Convention is expected to be signed by December. The World Bank-IMF Develop-

ment Committee has endorsed a joint programme of action. These are welcome moves, but considering the dimension of the problem, they can hardly be adequate unless effective measures are taken to meet the problems affecting major segments of the economies of these countries.

108. We whole-heartedly endorse the draft declaration on the critical economic situation in Africa which is being presented for adoption by the Assembly. In doing so, we should like to stress the comprehensive nature of the action to be undertaken by quoting from the report of the Secretary-General:

"It will now be necessary to move forward from reflection to concrete action. In this transition Africa should not stand alone: its economy is still too fragile to withstand the enormous stresses and strains of moving from crisis to reconstruction and development." [A/39/594, para. 207.]

109. Mr. DIALLO (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): For two days now a number of people have spoken from this platform to deal with the burning issue of the hour: the critical economic situation in Africa. My delegation shares all the concerns expressed here about the situation which prevails in our continent. Nevertheless, we believe that we cannot over-emphasize the difficulty of the deadlock in which the African economy finds itself and the seriousness of its implications for our countries.

110. Africa is going through a profound economic and social crisis characterized by prolonged drought, accelerated desertification and an international economic environment which is unfavourable in every respect. The sharp drop in commodity export earnings, the considerable increase in the external debt, high interest rates, the growth in protectionism and the drop in official development aid—all these factors indicate that we must bring concerted and sustained action to this situation.

111. The seriousness of the situation requires that action by the international community simultaneously deal with emergency assistance, the rehabilitation of agriculture and industry, and, particularly, the guarantee of increased financing by respecting the commitments undertaken under official development assistance. It is necessary also to increase export earnings by action aimed at stabilizing commodity prices at remunerative levels and by removing protectionist measures, as well as by adopting measures to cancel or at least considerably to alleviate the external debt of African countries.

112. To meet the challenge of development and to cope with the present critical situation, my delegation believes that integrated national policies and measures, as defined in the Lagos Plan of Action and in the Special Memorandum addressed to the Economic and Social Council by the ECA Conference of Ministers, provide a framework which is well adapted to national endeavours and to the support of the international community.

113. It is imperative to boost the agricultural sector in accordance with the priority attached to it in the Lagos Plan of Action, particularly to promote food self-sufficiency, a better balance between agricultural exports and food production, the carrying out of irrigation projects and the diversifying of agricultural systems, particularly in drought-prone areas.

114. Also, the technical and financial resources to promote the recovery and the development of African industry become essential, since the slow pace of

the Industrial Development Decade for Africa is still persisting.

115. The Harare Declaration on the food crisis in Africa, adopted in July 1984 by the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, the initiatives of the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with respect to the food crisis in Africa and the development assistance which has been generously granted by some donor countries are all elements which can help us to lay the foundation for prosperity and self-sufficiency in Africa, particularly in order to achieve food security in our continent.

116. Although assistance to countries afflicted by a food shortage has undoubtedly mitigated the suffering of the populations affected, it has not at the same time protected these countries from other, more serious shortages. This is why the Government of the Republic of Guinea is more than ever convinced that instead of competing, food and development aid in all economic sectors should rather promote agricultural and rural development in a co-ordinated way and thus help to create the conditions for genuine food security in Africa.

117. True aid must take the place of the simple desire to aid. Survival in Africa depends on this. The strategies and actions which should provide viable solutions to the African economic crisis require substantial investment commensurate with the problems we face. This and this alone is enjoined upon us by Africa in its request that we demonstrate active solidarity. We are asked to renew and even to increase our commitment to eliminate the current crisis once and for all by intensified and concerted efforts, so that the imperative need for stability and social peace can be brought about as quickly as possible.

118. We are very pleased that at the second session of 1984, in Geneva, the Economic and Social Council approved the conclusions and recommendations of the tenth ministerial session of WFC⁵, held in June 1984, and recommended to the General Assembly for consideration.

119. We acknowledge that co-ordinating multilateral and bilateral assistance is chiefly a responsibility of the recipient Governments, and in this connection effective co-ordination machinery at the national level can play a very important part. This is why it would be desirable for the various organizations of the United Nations system to grant technical assistance to the Governments which request it.

120. In conclusion, my delegation calls upon the international community very seriously to ponder the current situation in Africa, so as to reanimate the process of recovery, reconstruction and revitalization of the economies of our States. In order to do this, assistance should be devoted to restoring agriculture, improving export earnings, increasing financing available on favourable terms and alleviating debt and debt-service charges. Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Charter commits us to this.

121. Mr. DE PINIÉS (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In the past three years the very magnitude of the international economic crisis has perhaps concealed, at least partially, its particular impact on certain regions of the world. It has required the appearance of certain encouraging signs of recovery for the true economic situation in Africa to be revealed to us in all its tragedy. In these circum-

stances, the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the thirty-ninth session gives formal proof that the international community has definitively recognized the urgency and seriousness of the economic crisis in Africa. My delegation regards it as a duty to take part in this debate to reiterate the solidarity of the Spanish Government with the African countries at one of the most difficult times in their recent history.

122. The General Assembly's examination of the economic situation in Africa may lead to a correct diagnosis of the crisis and the choice of the most appropriate economic and social policy measures to combat it. Nevertheless, we understand that the main objective of the debate should be to contribute to increasing the awareness of world public opinion of the particular seriousness of the situation in Africa and to generate the political will of States to remedy the situation. In that task, the Assembly has the benefit of the important contribution made by the Secretary-General's report [A/39/594] and note [A/39/627], the Special Memorandum addressed to the Economic and Social Council by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the World Bank programme of action for sub-Saharan-Africa. These contributions, together with the statements made in the debate so far, give a diagnosis of the African crisis in which my delegation fully shares.

123. It is clear that the countries of Africa suffer from problems similar to those that affect all the developing countries—that is, an external debt which takes almost 25 per cent of export earnings to service, a deterioration in the real terms of trade, owing to a drop in real terms in the prices of raw materials, the mushrooming growth of the population, unemployment and a persistent stagnation of production.

124. To this general picture of the crisis is added a factor that is specific to the African continent and seriously affects it. Since 1970 Africa's agricultural production has been declining gradually, to the point at which countries with a great export potential in this area have become net importers of agricultural products. Food for the population of the region increasingly depends on imports and food aid. This situation is the result of a complex series of factors, including national agrarian policies, desertification and drought. The combined effect of these factors has been to bring the African continent to the brink. According to statistics provided by various international agencies, almost 135 million rural inhabitants are severely affected by desertification and at least 150 million people are suffering from malnutrition.

125. The African countries themselves have recognized their primary responsibility for drawing up and implementing adjustment policies commensurate with the seriousness of their problems. However, the magnitude of the task calls for supplementary aid from the international community. Only a strategy based on internal reforms and external co-operation will make it possible to tackle the structural causes of the crisis and lay the foundations for Africa's economic development. In this connection, my delegation fully supports the body of priority measures for international action proposed by the Secretary-General in his note. These include an increase in net financial flows to Africa, renegotiations of the external debt, improving compensatory financing arrangements in view of the fall in export earnings and—especially at this time—a massive increase in emergency aid.

126. The Spanish Government has not limited itself to supporting Africa's economic development by increasing its trade with the continent and its participation in the African mechanisms for regional development, such as the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund. In recent years Spain has been developing an important programme of scientific and technical co-operation with many African countries, and it has taken part in all the international efforts aimed at overcoming the emergency situations that beset the region.

127. My delegation is convinced that this debate may constitute the point of departure for a new stage in Africa's relations with the rest of the international community, based on realism and co-operation. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his last report, it will now be necessary to move forward from reflection to concrete action. In this united action, Spain is ready fully to shoulder its responsibilities.

128. Mr. ZLATANOV (Bulgaria): My delegation shares the deep concern already expressed by many of my colleagues about the critical economic situation in Africa. In a number of United Nations documents on the subject, including the latest report of the Secretary-General [A/39/594], data and alarming conclusions illustrate the profound socio-economic crisis that has shaken most African countries.

129. The crisis is one of sweeping dimensions. As one aspect of the critical economic situation in the developing countries, particularly in Africa, it has manifested itself most acutely in the form of food shortages, famine and the malnutrition of millions of people, the progressive depletion of livestock, the desolation of millions of acres of farmland, drought and the depletion of water resources. The economic crisis in Africa has been aggravated in recent years by extremely adverse climatic conditions—the long drought, which had a devastating effect on the development of agriculture in the large majority of African countries, where agriculture is the mainstay of the economy.

Mr. Lusaka (Zambia) resumed the Chair.

130. We view the critical economic crisis in Africa as a legacy of the deep-rooted colonial past of the countries of that continent. The sporadic signs of economic recovery in some of the developed Western States have brought no relief to the economic situation in the African countries. A concrete manifestation of their deep economic crisis is to be found in the declining rates of their gross national output, which dropped 0.1 per cent in 1983, leading to a substantial decline in the per capita income of the population, which has been decreasing by 4.1 per cent annually in the 1980s. Because of the unfavourable conditions on the world markets, as well as the policies of protectionism and the restrictions pursued by the Western capitalist countries, the external debts of the African countries by the end of 1983 reached the alarming amount of \$150 billion. The service charges alone on this unbearable external debt take more than a fifth—almost a quarter—of the export earnings of the African countries, a reality stemming from the policy of high interest rates of the financial markets of the United States and the other Western countries. In absolute terms, the servicing expenses of the African countries amount to \$8 billion for the beginning of the 1980s and are expected to reach \$16 billion for the period 1985–1987. These are vital financial resources of the African countries, part of

which could be used for solving their most critical economic and social problems.

131. It is hardly necessary to cite more figures to illustrate the critical economic situation in Africa. What is more important is that behind these figures are the wretched lives of millions of Africans—of millions of African children—and the tragic plight of a continent which has the economic and social potential to ensure the economic and social development of its countries and to resolve its most important economic, social and ecological problems.

132. Quite logically, the question is asked: What are the root causes of the current critical economic situation in Africa? Allow me to quote the report of the Secretary-General, which states: "The crisis has a long genesis reaching down to the colonial period." [See A/39/594, para. 143.]

133. Yes, the deep roots of the present critical situation—and I could not agree more with that—lie in the colonial domination and ruthless exploitation of the African countries. The attempts to defuse this crisis by means of palliative, one-sided measures, by advertising free-market models of economic development and by the use of salvaging operations of a dubious nature, at the price of political concessions to the Western monopolies, are not conducive to a radical solution of the complex economic and social problems of the African countries.

134. The Lagos Plan of Action, which my country supports, is a good example of the efforts of the African community to cope with the underdevelopment and to make economic headway. It is our view that the problems of the critical economic situation in Africa should be resolved, together with the problems with regard to the restructuring of international economic relations, on a just and democratic basis and by the adoption of effective urgent measures for the radical solution of the grave economic and social problems of the African countries. These problems can be solved only in conditions of peace and security and by ending the arms race unleashed by the aggressive Western circles.

135. The People's Republic of Bulgaria has been pursuing a consistent policy of solidarity and co-operation with the African and other developing countries, a policy of promoting economic, scientific and technological co-operation and the all-round development of the economies of those countries. It is based on the strict observance of the principles of equality, mutual advantage and non-interference in internal affairs in inter-State relations. Within the scope of its abilities, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has developed relations of active co-operation with many African countries through the delivery of complex projects and the organization and delivery of modern agro-industrial ventures, which has contributed to solving some of the food problems of many African countries. In this connection, my country has accumulated considerable experience in building up a modern and highly efficient socialist agricultural industry. The People's Republic of Bulgaria has contributed financially and materially and by the supply of qualified specialists in the construction of several industrial enterprises and irrigation facilities, in geological exploration and in the training of specialists, mostly on fellowships of the Bulgarian Government in our secondary and higher educational institutions. We believe that the public sector, with the increasing role of the planning process, as well as

the strengthening of control over natural resources, could be of assistance in solving many of the problems of development in the African countries.

136. In its desire to encourage the development of mutually beneficial economic co-operation, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has introduced a preferential tariff system for industrial commodities produced and exported to Bulgaria by the African and other developing countries. This preferential régime has cut import duties by 50 per cent or allowed total exemption from duties. The commercial relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the developing countries have developed dynamically, so that at the beginning of 1984 the trade amounted to \$2.3 billion. A large share of this trade turnover of my country is with the African countries, which are among our most important trading partners. At the end of 1983 more than 6,600 Bulgarian specialists in a number of developing countries, the majority of them in African countries, were providing assistance on the spot for the development of various branches of their economies, while more than 5,000 young students from the African and other developing countries have received university-level education in my country over the past few years.

137. The President of the Council of State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov, personally devotes particular attention to the promotion of economic co-operation with the developing countries, including the African countries. His many meetings and discussions with the heads of State and Government of many of the African countries, both at home and in those countries, have contributed immensely to the fostering of mutually advantageous co-operation with them. One concrete manifestation of this steadfast policy of co-operation with the African countries was the official visit of the Prime Minister of my country to Zimbabwe, Angola, the Congo, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Ethiopia at the beginning of last July. As a result of that visit a new impetus has been given to the further dynamic development of our co-operation and solidarity with the African countries, a policy which my country will continue to pursue in the future.

138. Mr. THIOUNN (Democratic Kampuchea) (*interpretation from French*): For three days the General Assembly has been considering one of the most serious problems faced by the world today, that is, the economic and social crisis in Africa, which is a result of a combination of factors such as the unfavourable climatic conditions, including drought and desertification, the world economic recession, increasing external debt and the constant deterioration of the terms of trade. This profound and alarming crisis requires decisive and concerted action on the part of the African countries affected and the international community as a whole if millions of human beings who are our brothers and sisters are to survive.

139. We hardly need to demonstrate the importance of the African continent in the world. Politically, we have only to recall that this continent, from which mankind originated, today comprises 50 sovereign States—a third of the membership of the United Nations. Economically, Africa possesses great natural wealth, both in mines and in agriculture, both exploited and potential, on which the development and prosperity of all countries, particularly the industrialized countries, largely depend. The political

and economic situation in Africa has an unquestionable influence on international relations and co-operation.

140. These facts emphasize the vital duty for the entire international community to come to the assistance of Africa and make an effective contribution to help it to resolve its current alarming problems. This is for all of us both a humanitarian and a political duty, implicitly laid upon us by the Charter of the United Nations. The continuous deterioration of the economic and social situation in Africa is indeed a danger for the stability of our planet and is fraught with danger for international peace and security.

141. At present at least 24 African countries out of 50—almost half—are suffering from a serious food shortage and urgently need aid, while 150 million people—one third of the total population of the African continent—are suffering from malnutrition and famine. Thousands of men, women and children are dying daily from hunger, thirst and endemic diseases. Hundreds of thousands of head of cattle, which are so essential for agricultural output, have perished.

142. The breadth and complexity of this calamity originate in persistently inclement climatic conditions and also in the international economic crisis, particularly the recent world recession, which have severely affected the African countries, particularly those south of the Sahara.

143. The drought, due to the irregularity, inadequacy and sometimes continued absence of rainfall, has ravaged inland savannahs and even the coastal areas of entire regions of the African continent which up to now had been spared. Rivers and water-courses have dried up. The earth itself is dying. Every year desertification overtakes 6 million hectares and reduces a further 21 million hectares to zero productivity. These disasters have led to mass migrations within a single country or from one country to another. The migration of men, women and children towards the more prosperous areas aggravates ecological problems which are already complex.

144. The difficulties due to unfavourable climatic conditions are further compounded by problems deriving from the exogenous economic crisis. Although this is a transient phenomenon, the recent world recession has had a particularly severe impact on a number of countries which were already in trouble before that happened. This has led to a shrinkage in the volume and value of exports from African countries and a deterioration in the terms of trade, which gravely hampers their capacity to import foodstuffs to supplement their own food production, which is constantly diminishing. In addition, there is the growing external debt, the servicing of which represents approximately 25 per cent of the export earnings of the African countries.

145. Undoubtedly, as the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has pointed out, we have not yet reached the bottom of the abyss and the worst may yet be to come.

146. As early as 1980 the heads of State and Government of the African continent, alive to the continuous deterioration of the economic and social environment of their countries and its serious consequences, adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the

Economic Development of Africa. Still more recently, during the tenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1984, the African ministers responsible for economic development and planning adopted a Special Memorandum in which they recognized that what they had to do, first and foremost, was to find a solution to the crisis, and they pledged themselves to redouble their efforts to do so. Quite obviously, no initiative could be taken, and even less could succeed, without the support and active efforts of the African Governments and peoples themselves.

147. Nevertheless, the African peoples and their countries are mainly the victims of an inhospitable climate and environment and also of an economic crisis which they are unable to cope with.

148. We agree with the Secretary-General, who in his note has clearly indicated that:

“By their recent actions, the African countries have demonstrated their will to overcome their difficulties and to prepare a better future for themselves. The Lagos Plan of Action already showed their determination to take their own fate firmly in hand. But the peoples of Africa need us: their trials are ours too and it is together that we shall overcome them.” [See A/39/627, para. 19.]

149. The time has come to move from words to deeds. In the short term, priority should be given to the food and medical areas in order to save millions of our African brothers and sisters, particularly in the countries of sub-Saharan and southern Africa, which during 13 consecutive years have been suffering from a severe drought. Of an amount of 2.9 million tonnes requested, the donor countries have already provided 2.6 million tonnes, but the needs for 1985 are even greater.

150. In the long term it is essential that the international community, particularly the developed countries whose economies have recovered, should create a favourable economic climate and increase their financial and technical assistance to supplement existing national resources, thus helping the African countries to implement the Lagos Plan of Action, whose purpose is to develop agricultural production not only for purposes of export but also, and more importantly, for food self-sufficiency and to support the process of recovery and reconstruction, particularly in the industrial sectors and in the physical and social infrastructures.

151. The delegation of Democratic Kampuchea would like to take this opportunity once again to reaffirm the natural sympathy and profound feelings of friendship and solidarity of its people and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea *vis-à-vis* the fraternal peoples and countries of Africa suffering from the economic crisis and natural calamities. As one of the poorest of the developing countries and, furthermore, a country which has been the victim of an aggressive and genocidal war—which the Assembly is aware of—Democratic Kampuchea is fully aware of the tragic situation which has been faced so courageously and tenaciously, and with such dignity, for two decades now by the peoples and Governments of Africa. Despite the serious problems which threaten the very survival of the nation and people of Kampuchea, my Government always tries to make a positive contribution to the efforts being made by the African countries and the international community to surmount the present alarming situa-

tion. It is because of those feelings that my Government has endeavoured, within its very modest means and in the difficult situation of war which we are experiencing, to participate in the two International Conferences on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and has made its own humble financial contributions to attest to its solidarity and fraternal and loyal friendship with the African peoples and countries.

152. We would like to express here our confidence that on the basis of our past and present work, and thanks to the praiseworthy efforts of our co-ordinator, Tomohiko Kobayashi of Japan, and also under your skillful guidance, Mr. President, the General Assembly will be able to achieve positive and concrete results which will be a true reflection of the profound concerns of the international community, particularly those of the African countries which are suffering in this situation, and that it will adopt by consensus the draft declaration on the critical economic situation in Africa.

153. It is our sincere hope that the noble efforts and the determination of the African peoples and Governments individually and collectively to carry out a frontal attack on the critical and alarming situation in their countries will be bolstered and actively and effectively supported by the entire international community. This is not a question of altruism, but rather a vital need dictated by global interdependence. This is in consonance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, whose fortieth anniversary we will be celebrating next year, namely, to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic or social character, and so on. The outcome of this enormous battle against a continent-wide ill, which is a challenge to mankind as a whole, will determine not only the survival of millions of human beings, our brothers and sisters in Africa, but also the dignity of all other human beings, our own dignity and peace and stability throughout the world.

154. Mr. AL-MUSFIR (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today we are meeting to examine the critical economic situation in Africa with a view to proposing immediate solutions, and then medium- and long-term solutions. But the main concern of our brothers in the African continent is to cope with the immediate tragedy afflicting some of the African countries, a tragedy which is becoming daily more acute, afflicting people, animals and plants. The desert is advancing rapidly over arable land and human settlements, and drought has stricken the people, the emaciated animals and the roots of the trees.

155. It is not possible to examine the economic crisis in Africa without going back to the recent past in order to identify its root causes. Africa is a densely populated continent endowed with enormous strategic natural resources and energy sources. Indeed, according to recent scientific reports, those resources which are still untapped are far greater than those already exploited. But the severity of colonialism and the selfish cruelty of the colonialists prevented the tapping of those resources except to meet their immediate need to increase profits. The policy of colonialism in Africa was the arbitrary disposal of the natural resources. When the colonialists departed under the pressure of African national resistance, they were succeeded by exploitative corporations which seized and monopolized the wealth of the

peoples without contributing to the national economic construction of those States.

156. The situation in Asia and Latin America is no better than that of Africa. A comprehensive look at the States of the third world which suffered in the past from foreign occupation and are suffering now from the control exercised by big corporations over their natural resources and markets shows that tens of thousands are dying from hunger in many of those countries, while millions are victims of chronic malnutrition. At the same time, spending in the industrialized countries on cosmetics and weight-reducing equipment is almost half the African debt, amounting to \$150 billion at the beginning of 1984.

157. The quick response by the industrialized and friendly countries to the appeals of the afflicted African countries deserves admiration and appreciation, provided that this response in offering food and other means of subsistence is not intended to impose political conditions on the needy countries, whose citizens are hanging in the balance between life and death.

158. The best solution to the economic crisis in Africa in the short run is for the countries which are in a position to do so to earmark food stocks and fodder for a period of no less than three years. This should be followed by a medium-term plan based on an effective contribution by the industrialized countries to help African States, by removing protectionism, lowering interest rates and controlling the inflation exported to developing States. As to the long-term solution, in our view this lies in curbing the arms race and designating funds thus released especially for the afflicted countries to help them in the field of development.

159. The following statistics show the importance of that approach. The lowest rates of military expenditure amounted in one year to \$19,300 per soldier, whereas expenditure on public education amounted to only \$380 per school. For every 100,000 persons there are 556 armed soldiers, but only 85 physicians. Forty-five dollars out of each individual's income in the industrialized countries are spent on military research, while only 11 cents are spent on medical research.

160. In brief, the tragic situation in the African continent cannot be treated in isolation from the present international economic order. This situation is a natural consequence of that order, for that order has failed and proved that it is unable to respond to the requirements of the age. Any attempt to maintain or perpetuate this order will lead the world economy to certain catastrophe. The recurrent economic crisis, inflation, unemployment, the galloping prices of finished goods, the widening gap between the North and the South and the increasing difficulties of the developing countries are but the natural consequence of prevailing international economic relations. Any attempt to tackle the economic situation at the level of individual States and without addressing the very nature of international economic relations will fail. The best solution is to replace the current economic order with the new international economic order proposed to the General Assembly.

161. The United Arab Emirates believes in co-operation among developing countries. In all sincerity and good faith we play our role in the group of developing countries. As to the geographic coverage of our assistance, my country has participated in

financing 76 projects in 39 developing countries, 18 of which are located in Africa. Our assistance concentrated on the financing of such important projects as the building of dams, roads, power plants, schools and hospitals. I need not mention the States which received assistance from my country in the form of long-term loans or outright grants. This assistance is over and above the bilateral assistance provided by my country, and in view of the critical situation in Africa we are studying the possibilities of participating in a campaign to help Africa. We call upon all States to participate urgently in such a campaign in order to cope with the deteriorating situation there.

162. Mr. GARCÍA-MORENO (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The tragedy in Africa today fully warrants the decision by the General Assembly to include in its agenda the item on the critical economic situation in Africa. The note by the Secretary-General [A/39/627] and the report prepared by his Special Representative [see A/39/594] analyse the situation clearly and competently. They, as well as those who took part in the preparation of those documents, deserve the gratitude of the General Assembly.

163. The peoples of Africa are going through one of the most difficult periods in their social and economic development. The structural problems they endure have now been joined by the distortions of the world economic crisis, thus creating a situation of great vulnerability which directly affects their populations and endangers their prospects of economic growth and long-term development.

164. This emergency situation is the result of persistent drought in many countries, most recently in the eastern subregion. Critical aspects of the crisis are current or imminent shortages in food and water, serious livestock losses, massive imports of aid which represent a heavy burden, the growing risk of malnutrition and disease and the displacement of the drought-stricken populations. The challenge these circumstances pose is the main reason that we have come together in this debate, which is also an appeal for solidarity and co-operation among peoples.

165. Hunger, it has been said, has no ideologies or political colour. The international community cannot remain indifferent to the slow and painful demise of human beings from malnutrition. We must all move in solidarity on this march. It would be truly terrible not to act knowing that so many lives could be saved.

166. The Secretary-General, independently of the specific problems of each country, has set out a certain number of general priorities on which worldwide concerted action would have immediately decisive importance: an increase in net financial flows to Africa, the external debt, commodity export earnings, an increase in agricultural production and a massive increase in emergency aid. The measures proposed to develop these areas must have the support of the international community.

167. This is a reality which truly involves all the developing world. The problems are fundamentally the same. However, as we have stated repeatedly, these problems are inescapable. They frequently have a growing effect and their impacts are increasingly devastating. I refer to the deterioration in the terms of trade, non-remunerative commodity prices, protectionist barriers, chronic balance-of-payments deficits, low levels of industrial development, food scarcity, a wider technological gap and for many,

large imports of energy resources. These are the components of the great tragedy which is also a tragedy for our peoples. To these components we can add the overwhelming burden of a debt which in many cases is impossible to repay in the current conditions, an indebtedness which depletes and absorbs resources which are essential for development, thus bringing to a halt the efforts of many years.

168. We should here emphasize the warning by the Secretary-General in referring to the possibility of increasing net financial flows to Africa:

“In this context, let me indicate my concern that the countries of Africa should not be held hostage to a debate among donor countries on how their respective contributions to the multilateral institutions are to be determined.” [See A/39/627, para. 7.]

To this we add that an important component of aid is non-discrimination. Aid tied to a specific form of conduct hampers and upsets international relations.

169. In the case of Africa the crisis is a grave one in which the emergency situation has been brought about by persistent drought in various African subregions, giving rise to alarming factors and endless needs in terms of food, agriculture, water, transport, storage and distribution, health, nutrition, energy and the environment.

170. The behaviour of the economic indicators could not be more discouraging. The gross national product of developing Africa declined by 0.1 per cent in 1983, and a marginal growth of only 1.8 per cent has been projected for 1984. As a result, per capita income has continued to fall since 1980, at an average annual rate of 4.1 per cent. In 1983 exports fell to their lowest annual rate since 1974. The external debt in 1983 rose to \$150 billion, of which \$120 billion were disbursed in service charges which amounted to 22.4 per cent of total export earnings.

171. Other factors at play are the deterioration in the terms of trade, an increase in interest rates and a reduction in real terms of concessionary financing.

172. The countries of southern Africa will have to import half of the cereals they will need in the year 2000 if population and production trends are confirmed. In the last 10 years, the per capita production of food declined by more than 10 per cent, and the average dietary energy provided merely maintained a level between 6 and 7 per cent below nutritional requirements. The volume of food imports has more than doubled and their cost has increased five fold. The resulting spectre of hunger is alarming.

173. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in view of the number of countries affected by natural or human disasters or which have experienced serious food shortages, alerted the international community in April 1983 to the need to contribute to emergency and rehabilitation operations, saying, “Africa is currently facing a series of problems which prevent progress towards unity, stability and a better standard of living for the majority of Africans.”

174. In recent weeks, the mass media, including television, have provided people in many countries with images of despair, painting a shocking picture of the poverty and hunger in several countries of Africa, especially in Ethiopia. The conscience of the rich countries, as is usually the case in such situations, has been jolted by the tragedy of the countless men,

women and children being subjected to sub-human conditions. Their suffering has obviously evoked a feeling of solidarity rooted in human brotherhood and particularly in the common desires and destiny of mankind. The most privileged feel that they have an obligation of solidarity to assist the destitute and the weak.

175. That is the appeal today, an appeal to concrete and determined action to help Africa overcome its emergency.

176. Colombia has offered its fullest assistance and co-operation—both bilaterally, with the nations with which it has diplomatic relations, and through the various agencies of the international system. Indeed we are united in the view that the concept of co-operation requires that every country study, understand and help to resolve the problems which create for others situations of poverty, backwardness, injustice and instability.

177. We believe that in the case of Africa it is not a matter of finding the providential oasis where one may temporarily quench one's thirst. We have the necessary potential to guide that important and great continent towards food self-sufficiency and well balanced development.

178. Africa, however, will continue to suffer until far-reaching changes are made—changes offering lasting solutions to its structural problems. To this end, local efforts must be backed by external assistance. Africa must seek long-term solutions to save future generations from such frightful suffering. The areas of action have been well defined in the Lagos Plan of Action. What is needed now is an effective mobilization of bilateral and multilateral assistance in the critical areas of technical and human development.

179. We agree that it is time to move forward from reflection to action. Africa does not stand alone in its tragedy or in this period of transition. In this context, we consider it necessary to adopt a realistic and clear declaration which points the way to be followed so that Africa will rise from its misfortune. Everyone, all the children of Africa, are today reaching out dramatically to those who live in plenty.

180. Mr. AZZAROUK (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The critical economic situation in Africa deserves the greatest possible attention by the international community. We must consider the various dimensions that shaped the basic elements of this issue; to deal with it superficially, without delving into its underlying causes, would prevent us from devising the necessary effective measures.

181. The whole socio-economic situation in Africa has reached a high degree of complexity with the interweaving of a series of natural, external and internal disasters, and their grave repercussions have led to a frightening increase in the collective mortality rate, starvation, disease and backwardness. This in turn has added to the burdensome legacy of colonialism and exploitation borne by national Governments.

182. Documents and reports submitted by international organizations, as well as the statements of various speakers, indicate that the international conscience has begun to be alert to the seriousness of this problem and has put forward some thoughts and ideas for its solution. There is a general consensus on the need for international efforts to limit the severe

effects of natural factors. Reference has been made to the responsibility of the international community to support the plans and programmes of the African Governments for food security and to lighten the accumulated external debt burden. Also necessary is a general commitment of assistance in carrying out infrastructure projects. The delegation of the Jamahiriya believes that these options give us some hope that the international community will grasp the responsibility it bears for the injustice and the plundering of resources of which the peoples of Africa have been the victims.

183. The international contribution cannot in any way replace African efforts. Everything shows that the Governments of the African continent are aware of the dimensions of their responsibilities. The development programmes and plans of many African countries give rise to admiration and appreciation. Africa is fully aware of its problem, and economic plans approved in the Organization of African Unity [OAU] framework indicate the firm will of the African States to face that problem by relying first and foremost on their own efforts and potential, and then on international assistance. Nevertheless, disturbing international circumstances have left very little room for manoeuvre, because there has been a reduction in the prices for commodities, which are the main export products of those countries, while their agricultural products have not been allowed on the international markets because of protectionist measures. Moreover, the African States' need to finance infrastructure projects and food security has forced them to accept loans on unfavourable terms. So-called foreign investment in marginal areas has never had any aim other than quick profits and the smuggling of African savings in hard currency.

184. Those are the external circumstances facing the development projects in Africa. Those projects cannot be put into effect without international co-operation and understanding.

185. Africa, which in the past contributed and still does contribute to the very creation of modern civilization, has the right to expect the entire world, especially the advanced States, to come to its assistance in order that it may cope with this dual challenge of survival and development. We do not believe it is proper for the donor countries to act in a way that detracts from the dignity of Africa, as though it were simply an act of charity that were involved. Indeed, that would be to deny Africa's inalienable right to its own resources, which were plundered during the era of exploitation and dependency, and would free the donor countries from responsibility for the backward economic and social situation inherited at the time of independence.

186. The solution of the African economic and social crisis is largely a question of justice, of sovereignty, of brotherhood, of solidarity among peoples. Effective solutions to the problem cannot be found if it is regarded merely as the result of natural disasters. It must be viewed against the backdrop of the essential reasons for it. Present international economic relations, despite their frightening impact on the African continent, are not alone responsible for the situation. Indeed, a number of other elements, no less dangerous, exist. They can be summarized as follows.

187. The first is the implantation and militarization of racist and expansionist entities which serve as

agents to care for and protect the imperialist monopolies. Everyone is aware that the presence of such aggressive entities places extra burdens on, in particular, the front-line States, which are obliged to channel their limited resources to national defence, at very high cost.

188. The second element is the attempts to divide the OAU and to encourage local disputes. That is another plot designed to distract the attention of African peoples from their essential problems and to squander their resources on marginal squabbles.

189. The third element is the attempts to exploit the present economic crisis in order to impose defeatist solutions and projects which serve the aims of imperialism, requiring recognition of the Zionist and racist entities.

190. The fourth element is the establishment of a link between assistance and concessions on certain political, economic and social options. That has been quite rightly rejected by the African Governments and peoples.

191. Those are all essential elements which underlie the present African crisis and which should be borne in mind by the international community in the quest for solutions to all aspects of the present crisis.

192. When we refer to the question before us today, we speak as an African State which, before the September revolution was unleashed, also suffered from famine, disease and underdevelopment. Indeed, the 1969 revolution had to cope with underdevelopment, to break the chains of political and economic subjugation and to liberate the country from foreign military bases. In its struggle to achieve its legitimate objectives, the Libyan people has had to confront plots and pressure, such as economic blockades and campaigns designed to deprive it of modern technology and the teaching and training provided in modern institutes and universities. All this has been aimed at frightening us and distracting our people's attention in order to prevent us from using our full potential for the progress of the country. Such attempts reached their apogee in the armed military aggression in our territorial waters in the Gulf of Sidra.

193. This proves once again that there are tremendous dangers entailed in the implementation of economic and social development plans, no matter what African State is involved, and it proves also that there is still injustice in international relations, although there are still some who would defend this.

194. The Jamahiriya attaches great importance to co-operation with African States, because we are an African State and we believe that regional and international co-operation is necessary. Despite our very limited economic potential and despite the pressures exerted on us, especially with regard to oil, we have performed our duty and given assistance for African economic development.

195. To do so, the Jamahiriya has signed a large number of bilateral agreements with most African States, agreements encompassing all fields of co-operation, including loans on favourable terms, credits and gifts, and we have also participated in the implementation of a large number of projects in the spheres of training, education, health and transport. Moreover, we have provided scholarships to more than 7,000 African students. In support of the campaigns against endemic disease and the consequences of natural disasters, the Jamahiriya has

provided assistance in cash and in kind to a very large number of African States.

196. We have pioneering experience in common action to ensure African food security and to give employment to hundreds of unemployed persons by the establishment of joint companies in the spheres of agriculture, marine fishing, metallurgy and shipping. Thus, joint Libyan-African companies have been established in 26 African States, with Libya providing more than \$800 million.

197. In regard to multilateral aid, we are providing assistance in banking and development funds as well as in the fields of intra-African and inter-Arab co-operation. We participate in all activities of the League of Arab States and the OAU, as well as in the co-ordination between the Strategy for Joint Arab Economic Development⁶ and the Lagos Plan of Action. As for the United Nations, we provide constant assistance, within the bounds of our possibilities as a developing African State, to the specialized agencies and international bodies dealing with the improvement of the economic and social situation on the African continent.

198. The critical economic situation in Africa is a major challenge which requires immediate action taking into account the various dimensions of the problem and clearly realizing the responsibilities of all concerned to put an end to the injustice which has been visited upon the people of Africa, who expect justice rather than pity.

199. Mr. MOUNKEILA (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): Speaking today on behalf of all members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel [CILSS], I wish to convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of President Seyni Kountché and all his colleagues and heads of State, several of whom have themselves congratulated you on your election to the post of President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly—a testimonial to your hard work, tolerance and wisdom.

200. We also wish to thank Jorge Illueca for having directed the work of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly with such competence and brilliance.

201. The member countries of CILSS extend their support and encouragement to Tomohiko Kobayashi for success in the discharge of his co-ordinating role in the informal consultations on the economic situation in Africa.

202. In 1974, prompted by this economic crisis and concerned by its first manifestations, in particular by one of its most destructive causes, the drought in the Sahel, six Sahelian States—Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad—whose economies had just been severely tested by the disastrous repercussions of the drought of 1968 to 1976, decided to establish CILSS. Later its membership was expanded by the addition of Gambia in 1975 and Cape Verde in 1977. There is no need to recall that that organization is evidence of the political will of the leaders of the States concerned to deal with this calamity and to strengthen their co-operation in all fields.

203. Faced with the disastrous effects of the drought and desertification, the States of CILSS could not attain their noble objective alone. Accordingly, they were very grateful for the General Assembly's establishment of the United Nations Sudano-

Sahelian Office to help them prepare their programmes, mobilize the necessary funds for their realization and ensure their implementation. Similarly, several positive actions, both bilateral and multilateral, were needed to supplement the national efforts made in this respect. Those efforts dealt particularly with the control of surface and ground waters, the protection of the vegetation cover, reforestation projects, improved fuel consumption, the combating of brush fires, the search for substitute energy to limit the consumption of wood, the construction of secondary roads and the training of human resources.

204. At this stage, I am particularly pleased to thank the Sudano-Sahelian Office for its appreciable support and to pay a deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, who was good enough to visit some of the CILSS States at the beginning of this year to ascertain for himself the extent of the calamity and to alert the international community to the plight of our countries.

205. In spite of everything that has been said and done during 10 years of fierce struggle, we regret to note that the Sahel has shown a record food deficit of 1.6 million tons of grain during the 1983–1984 campaign. The 1984–1985 campaign will probably be even more trying.

206. We greatly appreciate the demonstration of solidarity by the international community, particularly that of the various contributors of funds. Given the gravity of such a situation, we can do no better than repeat the declaration of Niamey, of 31 January 1984, of the heads of State of CILSS, specifically the appeal that

“all countries and organizations sensitive to the difficulties of the Sahel should give greater attention to the critical plight of our countries and support our efforts to develop a new kind of co-operation in the form of a Sahel fund, the sole means of guaranteeing us secure and foreseeable resources, without which the development planning of our economies will remain a perilous exercise and the present will be without a future”.

207. If we have spoken at great length about CILSS, it is because desertification and drought in particular, and the international environment in general, are the deep-rooted causes of the critical economic situation in Africa.

208. Following the example of CILSS, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and the establishment by six East African countries of an intergovernmental body to combat drought and desertification illustrate the persistence of this calamity and derive from the concern of the African countries involved to merge their efforts and co-ordinate their strategies with a view to ensuring effective, concerted action.

209. While CILSS is pleased with these initiatives, it wishes to see the development of South-South co-operation with these bodies and the strengthening of its co-operation with the Magreb, as was outlined at the Ministerial Conference at Dakar⁷ in July 1984. In such South-South co-operation the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office could play an important liaison role.

210. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that the Sahel is the pitiful symbol of underdevelopment, synonymous with countries subject to strong demographic pressures and to weak agricultural develop-

ment. The Sahel covers a large part of the African continent and is prey to all manner of difficulties.

211. The Assembly will agree with me that the solutions to these problems call for considerable financial and technical resources. To be sure, much effort has already been made in this field, but as we were told by the Director of the Sudano-Sahelian Office, these general resources that have been granted resemble the skeletons that one meets in the areas struck by drought and desertification; hence, the urgency to have at hand and to mobilize the political will which has been affirmed on so many occasions in our various resolutions.

212. Mr. MORENO SALCEDO (Philippines): A crisis that may well translate itself into a disaster of cataclysmic proportion is staring us in the face. It is not a crisis that developed overnight. For many years we have been aware of the potential dangers that now confront Africa. At this stage, there is no point in going over the reasons or the causes that brought about the present crisis. We are fully cognizant of all of them. This is really no time for hindsight.

213. It is for this reason that we wish to commend the Secretary-General for his clear-sighted approach to the problem. I refer particularly to his note [4/39/627], wherein he suggests, *inter alia*, action to be taken by the United Nations to avert a potentially disastrous situation. Specifically, he suggests, in paragraph 12, "a clearer sense of focus involving a reordering of existing priorities and a clearer commitment to action". We could not think of a more logical and practical approach to the situation. The objective, as the Secretary-General points out in the same paragraph, "would be to provide assistance that would produce immediate results and would not only relieve short-term constraints but also provide the basis for long-term action".

214. Of the three broad areas where the Secretary-General suggests the United Nations can intensify action, I would like to single out the first—that is, support for national programmes for the development of human resources.

215. For many years now my Government, within its limited resources, has been contributing modest amounts to some of the least developed African countries seriously affected by the present crisis. These contributions were specifically intended to assist their national programmes for human resources development. More recently—since 1980, to be precise—my Government, in co-operation with UNIDO, has been holding training courses in the Philippines for nationals of developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. These courses are implemented by the technical assistance council of the Philippines. We are happy to note that many beneficiaries of this programme have come from Africa.

216. Over the last two days of debate on the item before us the Assembly has spoken with one voice. Anxiety over the critical economic situation in Africa has been very evident. Equally evident have been the expressions of willingness to participate in concerted international action to avert disaster. The Philippines is privileged to be part of this collective voice.

217. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia): For several years Africa has been experiencing a deep and profound economic and social crisis, which has recently assumed alarming proportions, threatening not only

Africa's prospects for development but the very survival of its peoples:

218. The prolonged drought that swept across the Sahelian countries a decade ago has now spread to two thirds of the countries of the continent. The unprecedented famine that some 150 million people are suffering from at present in Africa is due, in large measure, to the ever-expanding encroachment of the desert, which every year claims millions of hectares of agricultural land. Indeed, desertification has become one of the most frightening natural phenomena confronting the world today. According to a recent report by UNEP, since the United Nations Conference on Desertification held at Nairobi in 1977, each year the world has irretrievably lost 6 million hectares of land, which is written off as desert wastes, while another 21 million hectares is useless land, that is, land reduced to zero or negative net economic productivity each year. This development and its catastrophic effects have had a direct bearing on the agriculture and food situation of the continent. In a single decade food imports have more than tripled.

219. As States Members of the Organization are well aware, my country, Ethiopia, is one of those African States that has been severely affected by drought and desertification. The drought we are experiencing in Ethiopia this year is the most serious in memory: 6.7 million people, 47 per cent of whom are children under the age of 14, are suffering from starvation and malnutrition. Precipitation during the main rainy season has decreased by 60 per cent and in some places by as much as 100 per cent. The harvest for the current year is estimated to be smaller by 20 to 30 per cent. Besides exacerbating the already tenuous food situation, the drought has caused the decimation of livestock and other valuable resources, such as wild game and birds, thus affecting negatively the entire ecological system of the country.

220. The Ethiopian Government has done and is committed to continue to do its utmost to shoulder its responsibility. So far, the Ethiopian Government has, with the meagre resources at its disposal, purchased 60,000 metric tons of grain in domestic markets for distribution to the drought victims. It has made an additional appropriation for a further purchase of 100,000 metric tons of grain from the international market. Furthermore, the Government has spent millions of dollars for port handling and inland transportation for incoming aid shipment. The Government has also put a sizeable number of civilian as well as military trucks, aircraft and military personnel at the disposal of the National Relief and Rehabilitation Commission to help the distribution of food and medicine. To respond to the urgent and immediate needs of the drought victims, the Government has established a high-level committee composed of six senior cabinet ministers, with full powers to mobilize all our national resources when and where required.

221. While it is more than sufficiently preoccupied with the emergency situation and the immediate task of providing relief, the Ethiopian Government has not been oblivious of the imperative need for long-term measures. It is in the process of launching a nation-wide campaign which will focus primarily on water management and water conservation, resettlement and the utilization of simple but modern agricultural technology. This venture, the main objective of which is self-sufficiency in food, is being

co-ordinated by the highest political body in the country.

222. It is obvious, however, that the dramatic consequences of the vagaries of nature with which the people of Ethiopia are confronted today are of such catastrophic proportions that they cannot be mitigated by national efforts alone. Cognizant of this fact, we in Africa are engaged in creating the necessary conditions for collective action against the common adversary. In this connection, I am gratified to mention that six East African countries—Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda—have agreed to establish an intergovernmental body, as called for in General Assembly resolution 35/90 of 5 December 1980. This has been duly communicated to the Secretary-General, and we are sure that the international community will be supportive.

223. African Governments are committed to doing everything in their power, collectively and singly, to alleviate the prevailing suffering, to arrest the deadly march of desertification and to intensify their developmental efforts. It must be clearly stated, however, that no matter what sacrifices Africa is ready to make it cannot cope with the unprecedented situation by itself. The reason is obvious: the continent's ever-deteriorating foreign exchange earnings simply would not allow it.

224. According to the ECA report on the economic and social condition of the continent, the overall annual growth of the gross domestic product in Africa fell steeply from an average of 4.6 per cent between 1973 and 1980 to 1.3 per cent in 1980, minus 2.7 per cent in 1981, zero in 1982 and 0.1 per cent in 1983. To put it differently, 15 countries registered either no growth or negative growth in 1978. The number of States that had undergone this traumatic experience had risen from 15 to 24 in 1981 and to 27 in 1982.

225. Furthermore, the unfavourable external economic environment of the last few years—the collapse of the prices of Africa's major export commodities, unfavourable terms of trade, balance of payments deficits, the decline of official development assistance and mounting debt burdens—has adversely affected the well-being, as well as the prospect for future development, of the peoples of Africa.

226. The negative external environment and the adverse climatic situation have thus reinforced each other to bring about the present crisis. When it is seen in this proper perspective, it is not difficult to conclude that the double challenge of survival and development with which Africans are faced today is also a challenge to the international community as a whole. It is with this realization that Africa is at the present session once again presenting to the General Assembly its well-conceived and well-considered collective thoughts in a concise declaration. The debates of the last few days give us reason to hope that the response of the international community will be tangible, meaningful and immediate.

227. Mr. SOUDANI (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The Tunisian delegation welcomes the praiseworthy efforts made by various United Nations bodies and organs. It is to their credit that they have stubbornly pursued the often arduous task of analysing Africa's problems, defining their components and suggesting appropriate remedies. The Tunisian delegation fully supports all the provisions contained in

the exhaustive report of the Secretary-General [A/39/594], who rightly concludes, "It will now be necessary to move forward from reflection to concrete action."

228. However, taking advantage of this opportunity and in the hope of contributing to the debate, which has already proved very worthwhile, I should like to make two observations.

229. First, we might take a short-term approach to those critical areas that are stricken by drought and desertification. We note that operations and projects designed to go beyond emergency aid and immediate food needs and to extend cultivated zones by means of development, the renovation of irrigation systems and the provision of tools for farmers have been provided at a cost often deemed to be too high. For example, it has been noted that drilling a well costs 5 million CFA francs, or nearly \$10,000. The explanation is that the planning and, in large measure, the carrying out of these projects are the work of experts and technicians who are not Africans and who are remunerated in a way with which everyone is familiar, and that the equipment used is acquired in market conditions—that is, at profitable prices, especially in an emergency situation.

230. That is why it is important that the aid given in the struggle against drought and desertification should not be encumbered by surcharges that render it inadequate and even meagre. It is important in this regard that the donors as well as the beneficiaries try to ensure that the best possible use is made of whatever assistance is given.

231. Secondly, with regard to the long term, we believe that the causes of the crisis so ably analysed in the Secretary-General's report under the heading "Main sectoral policy issues" [*ibid.*, para. 143–171] will be perceived in a fragmentary manner if they are not placed in the context of the international co-operation of the past two decades.

232. It is not by chance or the exclusive choice of the African countries, or that of the developing countries in general, that food production has often been neglected or insufficiently developed, so that agricultural and industrial production mainly geared towards exports could be emphasized. Most development aid, both public and private, and the larger part of foreign investments tend to promote this type of production, which satisfies the industrial needs of developed countries for raw materials and semi-finished commodities.

233. Of course, Africa, like all the countries of the South, has benefited from this assistance in terms of economic development as well as socially and culturally. There has even been talk of a "miracle" in some countries.

234. However, this approach to post-war international co-operation soon showed its limits. The recession that hit the developed countries, which in fact they helped bring about, has had serious consequences for the economies of the developing countries, particularly the African countries. Everyone deplores those consequences, which are often wrongly regarded as the result of mistaken policies or an absence of vision on the part of those countries. In reality, they are the result of policies that have outlived their usefulness.

235. In the circumstances the actions that have been advocated in order to move out of the crisis situation to the stage of reconstruction and develop-

ment will, we believe, be fully effective only if they are part of a new global approach to international co-operation that replaces an approach that has outlived its usefulness. Tunisia for its part believes that such a new approach to assistance should be based on new complementary relations between countries, both bilateral and multilateral.

236. This complementarity would have two bases. First, there would be a new international division of labour, sectors of economic activity being divided between countries and groups of countries in accordance with the abilities and aptitudes of each. With the financial and technical support of its partners in the developed countries, Africa has created and developed crops and industries that have been tested and found viable. If financial flows and increased technological transfers within the framework of common projects and joint ventures were promoted, African countries would be able to purchase products at moderate prices, with less costly labour. The developed countries, deciding to give up their present subsidies that are costly for their taxpayers, tariff-protection measures and other techniques that prejudice international trade and cause increasing imbalance in the balance of payments of African partners, would then engage in activities which are profitable for their economies, especially activities requiring a high level of technological competence and financial means.

237. The second basis of this new complementarity I advocate would be the development of subregional and inter-subregional co-operation and co-operation between African countries and countries of other regions with which they have traditional bonds of geography and history or which have reached a similar stage of development. The mobilization of their natural, financial and technological resources and of their markets on behalf of joint projects of priority importance would certainly have a beneficial effect on their capacity for development.

238. The judicious actions that have been advocated should form part of a comprehensive strategy. Without such a strategy, perhaps partial results could be obtained, but the crisis would not be eradicated. It should be stressed that the crisis affects countries north and south of the Sahara in varying degrees.

239. Tunisia has begun to implement this new approach. We have begun to explain our views to our partners of the South and the North and to make them more aware of this new approach to co-operation. We are happy to say that so far our efforts have been successful.

240. With the countries of the Maghreb, joint industrial projects have been or are about to be established. With the Arab countries of the Gulf, large development banks have been established. The mission of these banks is not only to identify and to finance projects in our countries but also to support forms of co-operation abroad in areas of activity in which Tunisia has acquired recognized experience. For example, in the chemical industry Tunisia and Kuwait have been working in co-operation with Turkey, Romania and the People's Republic of China to establish in those countries facilities for the production of phosphate derivatives from Tunisian ore, using Tunisian technology in a joint financial venture with Kuwait. In Africa—our continent, as I would like to remind those who tend to leave out the north—Tunisian experts have made their knowledge

available to some fraternal countries in a number of agricultural and industrial areas. Joint projects with Arab financing are in the gestation stage. Tunisia is committed to Afro-Arab co-operation; it is a cornerstone of our policy for co-operation.

241. With companies of France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, joint projects are being carried out in various sectors, such as agricultural equipment, automobiles and handicrafts, on the basis of joint financing and joint marketing in Tunisia, in those countries and elsewhere.

242. If we have referred to Tunisia as an example, if we are convinced that there are other countries that could similarly be referred to, it is to demonstrate that the new approach to international co-operation is neither merely theoretical nor beyond our means. For most of our countries with interdependent economies and affected by the crisis in varying degrees, that approach offers a means of lessening the impact of the crisis and moving ahead. However, everything depends on our common will and our imagination. There must also be mutual confidence based on the most careful possible management of our resources and an attitude that fosters understanding and avoids confrontation at all times.

243. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia): My country, Somalia, one of the least developed African States, is experiencing to some degree every one of the adverse conditions which together make up the African economic crisis. Therefore my delegation is highly gratified to see that the scope and intensity of this grave crisis is now widely recognized. We are also gratified by the evidence of a new resolve by all concerned to co-operate in providing immediate relief and assistance for the millions threatened by famine and also in providing support for long-term measures aimed at restoring economic stability and progress on the African continent.

244. The Secretary-General has played a central role in bringing the African crisis to the attention of the international community, and we are grateful for his continuing efforts to promote lasting solutions. We are grateful too that the traditional donors have stepped in with customary generosity to help feed the hungry and the starving and that the United Nations agencies most directly concerned are mobilizing their resources in order to give special attention to the situation in Africa.

245. As I have already indicated, Somalia to a great extent illustrates the African economic crisis in microcosm. At the end of the 1970s we were still trying to recover from the ravages caused by cyclical drought when we were hit by the effects of the world economic recession. Then, as a result of the struggles for self-determination in neighbouring areas, we became host to what was then the largest refugee population in any part of the world and remains to this day the largest in Africa.

246. Today, some 700,000 refugees are cared for in Somalia in official camps, while perhaps an equal number eke out an existence in the country at large. The basic needs of the refugees in camps are supplied by international assistance, but the presence of both groups has placed heavy burdens on our weak economy and fragile infrastructure and caused serious environmental damage.

247. Somalia is now once again affected by the spread of the catastrophic drought prevalent in many

parts of the African continent and is receiving a new wave of refugees from areas even more seriously affected. Food stocks in our refugee camps are dangerously low and rations have had to be cut even below subsistence levels. Developing countries, particularly the least developed, cannot sustain prolonged and repeated crises such as these without drifting into desperate straits.

248. While the current drought presents the most dramatic aspect of Africa's economic crisis, our critical situation has deeper and more complex origins. Since it is necessary to learn from the past in order to plan effectively for the future, it is pertinent to recall that for many years developing countries have been calling for reform of the international financial and monetary systems, for better terms of trade and stable commodity prices, for open markets for their products, for sustained and increased development assistance and for relief from debts incurred largely because of external factors beyond their control—factors such as the cost of energy, high interest rates and imported inflation.

249. Unfortunately, the consensus on a new and more just international economic order achieved at the seventh special session of the General Assembly has largely disintegrated, and hopes for the institution of a North-South dialogue have not been realized. The global recession has severely affected Africa, with its large share of the world's poorest countries. If that recession has indeed ended, benefits have not yet trickled down to the underdeveloped and economically depressed countries.

250. African countries must also face up to their own share of responsibility for the current crisis. The frequent failure to draw up comprehensive and integrated national development plans and to make the best use of development resources, and neglect of the agricultural sector, have retarded progress in development.

251. Today, when famine in Africa is no longer an abstraction but has a human face which cannot be ignored, we have to ask ourselves how the mistakes of the past can be corrected and how Africa can be helped—as other areas have been helped—to surmount its present difficulties and be set firmly on the road to economic recovery. Food aid for the starving is of course an immediate primary need, but more fundamental approaches must also be set in motion. In many countries, infrastructures must be strengthened, particularly in the area of transportation, so that relief and related development projects can be effectively carried out.

252. As we look to the longer term there are encouraging signs of progress. In the Lagos Plan of Action African States have already demonstrated their firm determination to accept primary responsibility for their own development. The need to revise economic strategies and formulate development plans with clear objectives and priorities is widely recognized. In this regard the donor community has concomitant responsibilities. The tendency of donors to fund projects which reflect their own interests rather than the basic needs of the countries concerned has on occasion been detrimental to the development process. It is to be hoped that the increasing number of round-table consultations will lead to greater realism in development planning and greater integration of bilateral and multilateral assistance.

253. The widening gap between populations and food supplies and the balance-of-payments problems caused by rising food imports underline the need to give the highest priority to agriculture. In many African countries the political will is being found to make the hard choices involved in attempts to change the balance between the agricultural and other sectors. In this context, we strongly support the FAO proposal that affected countries be given special assistance to provide short-term food subsidies while agricultural products are being priced to give the necessary incentives to farmers.

254. Vigorous efforts are also being made in Africa to provide better economic management. In this, as in other areas, there is a pressing need for competent technical assistance to help enable Governments to institute policy reform.

255. With regard to the external pressures on the structurally weak economies of the African countries, it must be emphasized that without debt relief African Governments cannot support the basic programmes necessary for recovery. Crippling interest rates absorb any surplus, and Governments cannot therefore release the full potential of their human resources through education and training. They cannot develop agricultural technology, raise standards of health or protect environments from desertification. Certainly debt relief needs to be considered together with other official assistance when the overall development requirements of individual countries are considered.

256. Another fundamental requirement is for official development assistance to be restored, at the very least, to former levels. Unfortunately, official development assistance has never been as low as it is at this time of economic crisis in Africa. This may be a function of the state of the world economy, but it hits the poorest hardest. My delegation particularly welcomes the suggestion of the World Bank that a special assistance facility outside regular donor programmes be established to provide flexibility in donor response. Countries which need additional assistance in effecting reformed development policies should benefit greatly from such an arrangement.

257. It is clear that Africa stands in need of massive assistance to overcome problems which if left unsolved could mean the disintegration of the social and economic fabric of many African societies. We call for urgent intervention by those States able to contribute to a rescue effort. It has been reiterated that the developed world would show enlightened self-interest by the transfer of generous development aid and technical assistance, by ending protectionism and by a more vigorous promotion of favourable terms of trade for the developing countries. However, it bears repeating that neither the financial and commercial interests of the world community nor hopes for a more stable world could be served by a new and more tragic widening of the gap between the rich and the poor nations. We hope that a new and more co-operative effort by developed and developing countries will now be set in motion, and we are convinced that such an effort will be of great benefit to all concerned, particularly the African countries which are in real crisis and massive need.

258. Mr. ABULHASSAN (Kuwait): The concern of the international community over the critical economic situation in Africa is a manifestation of the common human bondage. The situation affecting the

life of millions of people in Africa is a cause of serious concern for all mankind. What is of particular concern is the tragic dimension that the situation has attained. It has afflicted millions of people with starvation, hunger, malnutrition and displacement. It has affected all aspects of life, social and political as well as economic. The tragedy of the situation has cut across borders, affecting whole regions of Africa, including the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

259. The underlying causes of this dire situation are manifold. They are both natural and man-made, both internal and external. This situation is the result of the compounded effect of such factors as low rainfall and deforestation, such policies as those of dependence on cash crops and ambitious industrialization, and such circumstances as the overall worsening of the international economic environment as manifested by high interest rates, an unstable commodity pricing system and a low flow of aid.

260. The situation did not arise overnight; it had been in the making for quite some time. "The crisis", points out the Secretary-General in his report "has a long genesis reaching down to the colonial period." [*See A/39/594, para. 143.*] But what has made this situation into a focal point is the worsening drought and desertification in several regions of Africa. This development and the bleak outlook for improvement in 1984–1985 owing to poor crop prospects and high import requirements demand careful attention. The difficulties are immense but not insurmountable. We have to address the situation and to redress it promptly and effectively.

261. What is required is concerted action from both within and outside. The African countries alone cannot cope with the situation, and the international community cannot act in isolation without guidance by African countries. The resolve of the African countries themselves is manifested in the Lagos Plan of Action, adopted in 1980 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the Organization of African Unity, and in the Special Memorandum on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis adopted this year by the ECA Conference of Ministers. Their commitment to reassess their priorities and implement internal reforms is attested to. Now, the resolve manifested by this Assembly complements that commitment. The international community is called upon to complement it not by mere expression of political resolve but by action.

262. First, the immediate problem of survival should be dealt with. In this area, we believe that co-ordinated action on relief supplies should take into consideration, on the one hand, the problems of transport, storage and distribution and, on the other hand, the related requirements for health, nutrition and livestock. The second aspect of the matter that the international community should tackle is that of structural requirements or the long-term needs of development. To deal with the first problem in the absence of a clear framework of action for the second would be a prescription for recurrence of the crisis. It is of paramount importance to draw up targets for development that take into account the needs of and the priorities set by individual countries. Among the measures on which the international community can take action are the stabilization of commodity prices on remunerative bases, increased concessional finance and debt reforms.

263. Kuwait is not unaware of the problems besetting the African countries. We had long been active in connection with the relief and development programmes on the African continent. Our commitment pre-dates the emergence of the crisis situation. We acted directly on a bilateral basis with recipient countries, or collectively through institutions such as the Special Fund of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or regionally through established institutions such as the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, or multilaterally through specialist agencies such as IFAD or WFP.

264. In addressing the current crisis Kuwait has established a joint relief commission representing both the public and the private sectors for the primary purpose of co-ordinating relief operations. The commission met late in October and drew up a preliminary programme of relief assistance. Supplies of food and medicine will be flown out to the affected areas. Kuwaiti volunteers will be responsible for distribution to the afflicted population. The relief commission has also launched a public appeal for assistance in cash, food and medicine. A delegation representing the commission has been entrusted with the task of assessing the affected areas on the ground so that the future programmes of the commission can be drawn up.

265. I would like to conclude my statement with the assurance that Kuwait will continue to live up to its commitment to the dual objective of survival and development in Africa.

266. Mr. NGONDA (Zambia): Let me begin by paying a tribute to the Secretary-General for the initiative he took earlier this year to focus international attention on the critical economic situation in sub-Saharan Africa. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation of the efforts undertaken by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in particular, and the heads of international organizations in general, in responding to the crisis in a relatively positive manner.

267. Those who have addressed the Assembly before me on this agenda item have ably covered the general causes of and possible solutions for the crisis. Apart from that, the Group of African States has already circulated a document that sets out in clear terms what the problems are on the one hand and what kind of action is required from the international community on the other. I shall therefore limit my remarks mainly to the situation in my own country, Zambia.

268. Although Zambia has experienced long spells of drought during the last three years, its economic problems are in the main a function of cumulative external forces which began with the unilateral declaration of independence in the then British colony of Rhodesia, now independent Zimbabwe.

269. As a land-locked country Zambia's traditional routes to the sea and beyond had always been through Zimbabwe to the ports in Mozambique and South Africa, and through Zaire to the Angolan ports. Following the unilateral declaration of independence in Rhodesia in 1965 and the intensification of the armed struggle in Angola, the Government of the Republic of Zambia had no alternative but to reroute her exports and imports through the East African ports of Dar es-Salaam, Mtwara and Mombasa. This exercise entailed the acquisition of fleets of

road haulage trucks as well as the construction of an all-weather road to the Tanzanian border, the construction of an oil pipeline from Dar es-Salaam in Tanzania to Ndola in Zambia and the construction of a refinery at the terminal. Such projects had not been budgeted for, and therefore their funding necessitated forgoing projects in other sectors of the economy including, unavoidably, agriculture.

270. Zambia's economic problems in the recent past have been exacerbated by other external economic factors. Chief among these has been the unfavourable terms of trade. The prices of copper, our major export commodity and foreign exchange earner, have maintained a downward trend for almost a decade. Like all other developing countries Zambia has little say in the prices of its exports. Meanwhile, the prices we pay for imports of capital goods, vital consumer goods and oil have maintained an upward trend.

271. The Government and people of the Republic of Zambia are determined to restructure the economy in order to meet our basic needs. Zambia, like many other countries in the sub-region, is endowed on the whole with a lot of natural resources. There are sufficient arable lands and pastures. There are forests, rivers and lakes, all of which can be economically exploited to feed and shelter our people. What we lack in the main is financial resources and to some extent skilled human resources to tap our natural resources.

272. Most of our streams and rivers are not perennial and therefore dry up during certain times of the year. Consequently we are now constructing dams and weirs across most of the streams and rivers in order to conserve the waters in catchment areas. These waters are vital for irrigation purposes and animal life in the area. In order to combat desertification we have adopted measures to curb wasteful tree felling and have set aside tracts of forested land. Afforestation schemes have also been implemented in which trees are planted for commercial and industrial use.

273. Fisheries development is another area on which we place particular emphasis. Our people, particularly those who live alongside rivers and lakes, are encouraged to adopt modern fishing methods and fish preservation. At the same time concrete efforts are under way to improve fish distribution and marketing.

274. Most parts of southern Africa contain good pastoral lands and many of the people are cattle-owners. However, in order to sustain the traditional herds for beef and milk production, there is need to provide adequate veterinary services such as dipping and vaccination, as well as cross-breeding techniques.

275. Apart from the natural resources already mentioned, southern Africa has vast areas of arable lands. All our Governments are giving priority to the development of agriculture. We do so not only because of the need for self-sufficiency in food production but because we are convinced that the agriculture industry, when fully developed, will enable us to be net food exporters and thus derive some foreign exchange from that source. However, we still encounter difficulties in obtaining inputs like seed, fertilizers, pesticides, farm implements and storage facilities.

276. While African Governments have long recognized that the primary responsibility for the development of their economies rests with them, we need, as the Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs said in his statement in the general debate [*11th meeting*], the assistance of the international community to realize our developmental goal. It is our hope that the international community on this occasion will be more forthcoming than has hitherto been the case.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.

NOTES

¹A/38/493, annex I.

²Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its second extraordinary session, held at Lagos on 28 and 29 April 1980.

³E/1984/110, annex.

⁴*Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 29 August–9 September 1977 (A/CONF.74/36), chap. I.*

⁵See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19, part one.*

⁶Adopted by the Eleventh Arab Summit Conference, held at Amman in November 1980.

⁷Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification in the countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb countries and in Egypt and the Sudan, held at Dakar from 18 to 27 July 1984.