

**United Nations**  
**GENERAL**  
**ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records



**1st**  
**PLENARY MEETING**

Tuesday, 18 September 1984,  
at 3.40 p.m.

**NEW YORK**

*Temporary President:* Mr. Jorge E.  
ILLUECA (Panama).

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

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**Opening of the session by the Chairman  
of the delegation of Panama**

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I declare open the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Minute of Silent Prayer or Meditation**

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I propose that, on this third Tuesday of September, we observe the International Day of Peace, as proclaimed by the Assembly in its resolution 36/67, of 30 November 1981, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples. Peace is the primary objective of the United Nations. However, it remains an elusive objective rather than an accomplishment to be preserved.

3. As the threat of nuclear war and several armed conflicts keep reminding us, the eradication of warlike actions and the maintenance of international peace and security become each day the most timely and pressing of all our concerns. The peoples of the world rightly expect us to rededicate ourselves to the constant search for peace among nations and peoples envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

4. I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

*The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.*

**AGENDA ITEM 115**

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

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before turning to the next item on the agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/39/498, containing a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that two Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. I should like to remind delegations that Article 19 of the Charter states:

“A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years.”

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this information?

*It was so decided.*

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**Credentials of representatives to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly: (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee**

6. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly shall at the beginning of each session, on the proposal of the President, appoint a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members. Accordingly, it is proposed that for the thirty-ninth session the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Bhutan, China, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Italy, the Ivory Coast, Paraguay, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

*It was so decided (decision 39/301).*

7. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): In keeping with an established tradition, I should like, as President of the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, which closed yesterday, to share with members some reflections on the work of that session and on the relationship between the Organization and the world in which we live. I venture to say that I may be able to offer a different approach to its deliberations because I have

been the only President of the General Assembly who has also had the honour and responsibility of serving simultaneously as a Head of State.

8. The session that has just come to an end, although perhaps less dramatic than others, was clearly an important one. It should be recalled that last autumn we had one of the greatest assemblages of world leaders in our history, including 18 Heads of State, 2 Vice-Presidents, 8 Prime Ministers and 99 Foreign Ministers. We are deeply grateful to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, whose initiative led to such a distinguished gathering of heads of State and Government.

9. At its thirty-eighth session the General Assembly dealt with 146 agenda items, a record number in the history of the Organization.

10. Although we considered the most pressing issues facing mankind, it is apparent that most of the problems that confronted us a year ago still face us today. Because of the complexity of those problems—characteristic of the state of the world in which we live—it would have been unrealistic to expect that the thirty-eighth session, or any other single session, could take major steps towards their solution. The unfortunate shooting down of the Korean airliner, the absence of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Andrei Gromyko, from the general debate, the escalation of military activities in Central America, the massacre of more than 200 United States and French marines in Beirut by a terrorist group, the deployment of missiles in central Europe by the two power blocs and the abandonment of the negotiating table by the two super-Powers were only some of the many developments which from the very outset created a bleak and discouraging atmosphere for the Assembly.

11. We do not—and must not—expect quick and spectacular results. Although it is cause for regret, we must accept the fact that our world is characterized by controversies that have their roots in centuries-old discords that have never been resolved and that are aggravated today by national rivalries, distrust and insecurity and by gross inequality in access to material goods and opportunities, in itself an insuperable obstacle to a satisfying and productive life for all peoples.

12. I hope that my words will be taken not as a message of discouragement but, rather, as a message of encouragement to evaluate realistically the state of affairs that we faced last year and that, unfortunately, we shall have to deal with again in the immediate future. Of course, we would not be true to ourselves if we did not make an honest appraisal of where we stand and how far we still have to go to give true meaning to the purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

13. This is a proper occasion to make such an appraisal, because we are not only inaugurating a new session of the General Assembly but also today commemorating the International Day of Peace. This should remind all of us, in our twofold capacity as national representatives and international statesmen, that our first responsibility to each of our own peoples and to all the peoples of the world must be the cause of peace. It is only through a constant and genuine attachment to the basic objective of the United Nations—that is, the elimination of the

scourge of war—that we can discharge our most important obligation, our obligation to humanity.

14. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization [A/39/1], has wisely warned us of the danger of replacing the institution of the United Nations in the solution of the problems that led to its establishment by recourse to force or independent actions. He has reminded us that there is no proof that problems such as disarmament, hunger and economic development can be solved effectively through purely bilateral or unilateral efforts.

15. We need to revive political will and concerted energy to take measures that would resolve conflicts and alleviate the tensions that now afflict us. It is also appropriate to bear this ideal in mind, as well as the need to plan concrete measures, in studying the programme for the commemoration next year of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

16. One of my most valued tasks has been that of serving as the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations. Far be it from me to anticipate measures to be taken by the next session of the General Assembly in connection with the report that we are preparing. I cannot, however, conceal my pleasure at the great interest demonstrated by Member States in this issue, as well as my pleasure at the fact that the Committee recommended that at the thirty-ninth session an item entitled “Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1985” be included on the agenda.

17. It is really encouraging that India, on behalf of the non-aligned countries, has submitted a draft resolution [*see A/39/49, para. 71*] containing important proposals for the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary, including a suggestion that the theme of the commemoration be “United Nations for a better world”.

18. I am convinced that the fortieth anniversary will give us all a useful and valuable opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In doing so, we should give careful thought to the world situation and to the progress achieved thus far by the Organization, drawing from the failures of the past the necessary lessons to make a greater contribution to the establishment of a better world in the future.

19. It is particularly appropriate to proceed in that way because we are on the threshold of International Youth Year. Those of us who now have responsible posts are particularly committed to the young generation and to generations still to come. The world of the future will be their world, and what we do here—or fail to do here—will in large measure determine what shape that world will take. Therefore, the precedents that we establish here should promote the efforts to make that future world a world of peace, justice and equality.

20. In this connection, I must reject categorically the pessimistic view of some observers—who should know better—that the United Nations is becoming irrelevant to the solution of the real problems of the world community. In so many ways we see evidence that international co-operation through the United Nations system offers the best hope of coping with problems that transcend national boundaries. I have in mind, for example, the growing scourge of drug abuse, which is an increasingly critical problem

today, not only in the developed countries but also in the developing countries. The health and future well-being of thousands of young persons are of particular concern in this regard. For that reason, Panama was proud to join with the Presidents of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela in adopting the Quito Declaration against Traffic in Narcotic Drugs of 11 August 1984, and in asking that this traffic should henceforth be regarded as a crime against humanity.

21. I earnestly hope that the General Assembly will give serious consideration to the Declaration's call for "international legislative action capable of directing an effective campaign against traffic in narcotic drugs beyond national frontiers and imposing penalties on offenders, wherever they may be" [A/39/407, annex, para. 8].

22. In identifying ways in which international co-operation offers great hope, I wish to refer as well to the activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights. It is particularly encouraging to note the growing universality in the acceptance of international human rights instruments and the more systematic examination of human rights violations in all parts of the world. Evidence of this is seen, for example, in the expanding number of instances of the appointment of special rapporteurs to look into the human rights situation in specific countries. It is significant that Latin American Governments are foremost among those that have agreed to receive and co-operate with those special rapporteurs. Another example is the increasing emphasis on the examination on a global basis of specific problems such as disappeared persons and summary executions.

23. In my view, the need for serious reflection and for resolute action has never been greater. Last December, as we concluded the main body of the work of the thirty-eighth session [104th meeting], I felt it necessary to speak out about the intensification of the arms race, both nuclear and conventional, which I feared then, and fear now even more, represents the greatest threat to its survival that mankind has ever faced. I appealed from this podium particularly to the United States and the Soviet Union to halt the unbridled arms race and to return to the negotiating table. That appeal was repeated subsequently in letters addressed to the leaders of the two Governments. Regrettably, neither of those steps has been taken. Indeed, the situation has continued to deteriorate, the atmosphere of tension worldwide has not diminished and the arms race goes on. Last year, more than \$750 billion was spent, and it is estimated that some trillion dollars will be spent in the coming year. Once again I urge those two countries in particular, and all of us and our Governments in general, to make a commitment now to a determined effort to take urgent and meaningful steps to reverse this deadly process, which is leading mankind towards extinction.

24. The arms race, of course, assumes a particularly dangerous dimension in a period such as this of great instability and turmoil. The Middle East conflict, which has festered so long and with such obvious implications for international peace and security extending beyond the confines of the region, appears as far from a solution as ever. In his report on the work of the Organization [A/39/1], the Secretary-General has given us a reminder of this situation and

drawn our attention to the notable lack of concrete action towards a peaceful settlement of the problem.

25. We should, I believe, devote our attention to examining whether this institution can make a more practical and realistic contribution to this process than we have done in our repetitive debates and resolutions in the past. Whatever course we follow, however, we cannot succeed unless in the process we find a way to satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian people to their legitimate national rights as an independent State, doing so in a way that permits all States in the area to exist within secure national frontiers.

26. Other areas of tension continue to plague the world. We must all share a sense of regret at the tragedy of the continuing conflict between Iran and Iraq, with its devastating loss of lives. The Secretary-General needs and deserves the full support of all Member States as he pursues his efforts to open the way to a solution.

27. We are also mindful of the long suffering on the island of Cyprus, which has fallen victim to foreign occupation. It is to be hoped that through the good offices of the Secretary-General the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities will soon reach the necessary agreement for the harmonious preservation of the independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Cypriot nation.

28. In South Africa we see the undiminished evil of *apartheid* and the tragic cost in human lives and denial of human rights that the continuation of that policy, as anachronistic as it is abhorrent, entails. The related issue of Namibian independence is one on which I expect my successor, Mr. Paul Lusaka, who is one of the world's leading experts on the subject, will no doubt wish to comment in greater detail.

29. Regarding my own part of the world, I am pleased and proud to report that the efforts of the Contadora Group go forward firmly, despite all rumours or news to the contrary.

30. The Seventh Joint Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and of the Central American countries, held at Panama City on 7 September this year, clearly marked a major step forward in the negotiating process. The revised version of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America [see A/39/562] accommodates, for the most part, the proposals put forward by the Central American Governments. Their final comments should reach Panama by 15 October at the latest, so that any last-minute changes that are necessary can be made to the document and the countries concerned can proceed to sign and implement it without delay.

31. The Contadora Group has played its part in this process satisfactorily. Now it is the responsibility of the Central American Governments to demonstrate by embracing this document their political will to achieve peace. The international community can help in seeing that this goal is achieved by urging the five Central American Governments to take the historic step of signing and implementing the Contadora Act, which affords a golden opportunity for a harmonious transition to peace and co-operation in Central America.

32. Last year a consensus in support of the Contadora initiative emerged in the statements made in the general debate in the Assembly. Moreover, it is very

encouraging that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Community, Spain and Portugal will be meeting on 28 and 29 September in San José, Costa Rica, where it is expected that they will reaffirm their support for the Contadora process and respond to the appeals of the Committee for Action in Support of the Economic and Social Development of Central America, which has been set up under the auspices of the Latin American Economic System [SELA]. It is also gratifying that the representatives of the Contadora Group will be awarded the Prince of Asturias Prize on 17 October in Madrid. These developments give us some ground for optimism about the peace-making efforts of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

33. As my term of office draws to a close, I wish once again to express my gratitude to all those Member States which made my election possible, particularly the countries of Latin America, the region to which the presidency of the thirty-eighth session fell in the geographical rotation. It is understandable, therefore, that, without forgetting the universalist as well as the multilateral and pluralist vision of the United Nations, my presidency should have had a markedly Latin American accent. This is because those of us who are admirers of Bolívar can join with the Liberator in saying: "My homeland is America". With the indulgence of representatives, I should like to share some thoughts on the current situation in Latin America as seen through the prism of the Charter of the United Nations.

34. From the southern bank of the Río Bravo to the furthest limits of the South Atlantic, in a vast expanse of 20.6 square kilometres, live 400 million individuals; by the year 2000, we shall number 550 million. History has made us neighbours, in this hemisphere, of a nation which was the first in modern times to rise up against and defeat a colonial empire, to become, some 20 decades later, a colossal military Power.

35. We Latin Americans have our own distinctive characteristics and aspirations. We are struggling to define and shape our own destiny. As independent and sovereign States we tend to pursue our interests by harmonizing them, within the continent and worldwide, with those of other States, without considering ourselves bound by the interests of any super-Power, especially when we have no say in its decision-making processes. As third-world countries, we belong to the Group of 77 and we share its views. We are moving towards a growing Latin American involvement in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as the most dynamic and positive force for furthering the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

36. In our part of the world we favour regional understanding under conditions of sovereign equality and mutual respect. This, logically, requires a reform of the Organization of American States [OAS] to bring it more in line with the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. We consider that the election of the distinguished Brazilian statesman, João Baena Soares, as Secretary-General of the continental organization can pave the way for its effective restructuring.

37. The self-determination, independence and sovereignty for which the founding fathers of the Latin American republics fought have inspired the thinking of statesmen from the region who have been associ-

ated with the proposition that Latin America must benefit first and foremost from the development of its natural resources and its economic activities as the material underpinning of its distinctive personality and authentic culture.

38. Bolívar's idea of an Assembly of plenipotentiaries in the political sphere, a Latin American judicial organ in the legal sphere, an agreement on military forces for collective security, and an economic and social body to promote the well-being, progress and development of our peoples is still valid today and stands as the essential goal for the unity and integration of Latin America. Such Latin American mechanisms could operate side by side with the OAS, which is designed to serve as a common forum for negotiation and co-operation between the Latin American States and the United States of America.

39. Latin America has learned the hard lessons of the South Atlantic crisis and the Central American conflict. We are aware that, in accordance with the basic aims of the United Nations, a peaceful settlement must be sought of the question of Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and that the right of the nations of Central America to peace and self-determination must be enforced.

40. It is in the same context that the Latin American peoples place the question of the independence of Puerto Rico, which, like Cuba, was viewed by Bolívar as a nation, one of the Hispanic-American historical and cultural communities with a legitimate claim in its own right to a place in the family of Latin American nations.

41. Peaceful settlements must also be found for the regional boundary questions. The sufferings and anxiety of the communities living in areas affected by such conflicts, which can be settled only through conciliation, must not be prolonged. There is no justification whatsoever for such conflicts between fraternal countries which are called to a higher common destiny.

42. The preservation of the neutrality of the Panama Canal is one of the priorities of Panama's foreign policy and is of the utmost importance for both the American continent and the international community. Respect for and compliance with such neutrality ensures the peaceful, equitable and expeditious use of the inter-ocean link and helps to establish the necessary conditions for its ongoing improvement.

43. Panama, the United States and Japan have set up a commission for the purpose of drawing up the terms of reference for a study of alternatives to the "Canal of Locks" so that the international water link can meet the demands of world shipping in the next century.

44. The future of the canal as a waterway providing an international public service depends on strict compliance with the letter and spirit of the 1977 treaties. The canal, its installations and the areas necessary for its defence serve peaceful communication and co-operation between all peoples and countries; in no circumstances must they be used for purposes of war or acts of aggression against any country.

45. It is therefore all the more significant that, in pursuance of the treaties, on 1 October 1984 the authority of the United States to administer the Americas School will expire and consequently the School's facilities and Fort Gulick will revert to Panama, where only the Panamanian flag will wave.

On the same date United States offices which provide postal services for the employees of the Panama Canal Commission will cease to operate, and those employees will thereafter use post offices of the Republic of Panama, which is taking resolute strides towards the strengthening of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

46. The solution of economic and social problems goes hand in hand with the solution of political problems. Accordingly, we attach the highest priority to SELA. We would recall here in this world forum that Latin America, with a foreign debt of \$350 billion, has a greater stake than any other region in the resumption of the North-South dialogue with the aim of giving an impetus to international economic co-operation for development.

47. The Quito Declaration and Plan of Action, adopted by the Latin American Economic Conference, held at Quito from 9 to 13 January 1984 [A/39/118, annex], are of relevance to such issues. The Declaration contains a thorough and exhaustive analysis of Latin America's present situation and outlines possible solutions to be included in the plan of action that will be discussed at the tenth meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA in Caracas in a few weeks' time.

48. Here too we must recall that international stability cannot be achieved unless there is some significant redress for the impoverished peoples and nations of the world.

49. In this connection, as I said yesterday, at the close of the thirty-eighth session:

“Efforts to obtain a favourable reaction to global negotiations from our partners to the north must be continued . . .

“ . . .

“Only global negotiations which are universal, carried out with a clear sense of the interrelationships between issues of trade, development financing, the international monetary system and other basic elements of the development process will make it possible for the world economy to emerge from the structural crisis which it is currently undergoing and which has played such havoc with the fragile economies of the developing countries.

“To persist in refusing to launch global negotiations can mean nothing else but a rejection of international co-operation, a withdrawal from multilateralism and a return to nationalistic bilateral approaches, with disastrous consequences for the preservation of the economic and political independence of the developing nations.” [106th meeting, paras. 22, 24 and 25.]

50. I hope also that this session of the General Assembly and fortieth-anniversary convocations will continue a useful examination of the objectives and working methods of the United Nations in general and of the General Assembly and the Security Council in particular. In this context, I am very pleased to note that UNITAR has taken the initiative of proposing that next April former Presidents of the General Assembly meet to consider how the Assembly's performance might be improved. For my part, I should be most pleased to participate in such a worthy undertaking since in my opinion all the statesmen who have preceded me as Presidents of the General Assembly have earned the respect and gratitude of the international community.

51. Before concluding I should like to reiterate my deep thanks for the support and co-operation I unfailingly received from all delegations, the Secretary-General and the staff of the Secretariat. I shall always treasure the rewarding experience it has been to preside over this Assembly of nations. I believe that at its thirty-eighth session, despite the many difficult issues it faced and the limitations placed upon it by the nature of the world in which we live, the General Assembly was able, on balance, to make a meaningful contribution to furthering the objectives of the community of nations. I am confident that at its thirty-ninth session, under the wise guidance of Mr. Paul Lusaka, the General Assembly will likewise strive to deal in a constructive manner with the many remaining and new issues on its agenda.

52. What a great challenge it is! In many ways, slowly but surely, we are helping to shape the world of tomorrow—a tomorrow which in the brief space of 15 years will lead us into the third millennium. That world will continue to be one rich in diversity but one where with patience and goodwill we can harmonize cultures, religions, different ways of life and political systems which today divide us, and can achieve in that not-too-distant future, through the United Nations, our common goals. Let us not despair. Let us be convinced that, with mankind's limitless imagination, we will be able to give firm direction to this magnificent planet, eliminating conflicts and ensuring a better life for the billions of people who will by then have inherited the earth.

#### AGENDA ITEM 4

##### Election of the President of the General Assembly

53. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now invite members to proceed to the election of the President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

54. May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the thirty-ninth session should be elected from among the African States. In this regard I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of African States that his Group has endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Paul John Firmino Lusaka, of Zambia, for the presidency of the General Assembly.

55. Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare Mr. Paul John Firmino Lusaka, of Zambia, President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly by acclamation (*decision 39/302*).

56. I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Lusaka on his election and invite him to assume the presidency.

*Mr. Lusaka (Zambia) took the Chair.*

##### *Address by Mr. Paul J. F. Lusaka, President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly*

57. The PRESIDENT: I am deeply honoured to be elected President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My election to this high office is first and foremost a tribute to my country, Zambia, and to my President, Mr. Kenneth David Kaunda, who has made Zambia's philosophy of humanism

and support for the United Nations and international co-operation the hallmark of Zambia's foreign policy.

58. I would like to express my sincere thanks to each and every Member State represented in this Assembly for this unanimous election. I wish in particular to thank the members of the Group of African States at the United Nations for their support and request them to convey my thanks to the African Heads of State or Government for nominating me at the nineteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa in June 1983. I thank also the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for supporting that nomination. Let me assure you that I shall endeavour to live up to the trust you have reposed in me. In doing so, I shall be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and by the collective will of this Assembly.

59. I assume this responsibility with some trepidation, especially when I look back at the long line of my illustrious predecessors, who constitute a veritable hall of fame. I have in particular the unique honour of assuming the presidency of the General Assembly after a Head of State, Mr. Jorge Illueca, President of Panama, who presided over the thirty-eighth session. With his gracious personality and dignified composure, his dedication and commitment to the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and his wise and courageous leadership of the Assembly, he has set an example which will not be easy for me to emulate. But I take solace in the fact that my task will be facilitated by the wise and experienced counsel of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, whom I have come to admire and respect for his intellect, judgement, tact and understanding during our very long and intimate association in several capacities. I shall naturally rely on the usual co-operation of the States Members of the United Nations in our endeavour to carry out the difficult task before us.

60. Twenty years ago a distinguished son of Africa, symbolizing Africa's decade of independence and emancipation, was elected the nineteenth President of the General Assembly. It was a time of acute crisis for the Organization and the shadow of imminent collapse hovered over the General Assembly. It was our good fortune that, with exceptional skill and imagination, arrangements were found that ensured the survival of the Organization.

61. It is instructive to recall the underlying considerations and factors that compelled the consensus which surmounted the crises at that time. Member States, although dedicated to the important principle of collective financial responsibility for peace-keeping and for sustaining the Organization, were equally conscious of the critical role of the greatest of Powers in ensuring the efficacy of the United Nations. Consequently, every effort was made to promote a more co-operative relationship between the two major Powers with a view to ensuring the survival of the Organization.

62. Today, as we prepare to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, we are challenged by a whole array of difficulties that spell profound crisis for the Organization. We all deeply regret the present low ebb in the relationship between the two super-Powers. While there is no assurance that good relations between the United States and the Soviet Union will result in a more effective United Nations,

a non-co-operative relationship certainly adds to its difficulties. A central theme of the Charter is the principle of a concert of great Powers, and this is given concrete form by the special responsibility entrusted to the members of the Security Council. It is therefore understandable that we should make a strong appeal to the great Powers urgently to explore every avenue to resume dialogue in a spirit of understanding, responsibility and flexibility. There is an agenda demanding urgent attention, namely, the need to work out mutually acceptable arrangements to stabilize the strategic balance and to halt and reverse the arms race, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons. The world is not safe when the great Powers are not engaged in serious dialogue to control and to halt or freeze the ever-increasing modernization of nuclear weapons.

63. Conventional wisdom suggests that the greatest of Powers do not need the United Nations to survive. Indeed, some even assert that international security since the founding of the Organization has been guaranteed by the nuclear "balance of terror" and that the existence of the Organization has had nothing to do with it. While it can be argued that this balance of terror has played a role in preventing total war, it has contributed very little to the creation of real peace. In contrast, the United Nations has made substantial contributions. Certainly, a strong case can be made to show that a world without the United Nations would be a much more dangerous place in which to live. Even the balance of terror itself operates within a context of diplomacy and international exchange; and to this extent, at least, all States depend upon this context within which the United Nations is a major element.

64. However, whether one or another State could possibly survive without the United Nations is not the central or crucial issue. The small and medium-sized States need the United Nations. This is not because they are confident that the United Nations can ensure their security and independence or indeed their very survival. On the contrary, the cumbersome methods of the Security Council and its increasing difficulties in taking timely and effective decisions offer no firm hope in that direction. Rather, and I hope that this is true also for the great Powers, they need the United Nations because it still represents mankind's most imaginative structure for using co-operative methods to tackle man's ancient enemies, namely, war, disease, poverty and the denial of basic human rights and freedoms.

65. In favourable circumstances, the United Nations creates the setting within which States can use their common wisdom to enunciate the norms which, when observed, provide for the maintenance of international peace and security.

66. It is tempting for Member States—perhaps relying too much on their own military, industrial, economic and moral authority—to believe that they can not only ensure their own security, but also impose their own particular concepts of peace and security on the world community. History, in its long display of the rise and fall of great empires, teaches us a different lesson. No State—however awesome its military power or however great its industrial and economic strength—can have a unique grasp on common sense, nor can it unilaterally command the strength of purpose and the tenacity of commitment required to safeguard the peace and security of the world community. Of course, I am aware that a single

State might be well placed to obstruct international efforts to strengthen the global machinery for peace and security. But we should never forget that obstruction is no substitute for leadership.

67. The approach of the fortieth anniversary of the Organization affords us an uncommon opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the important truth that the world needs the United Nations. The conceptual framework which gave birth to the Organization is still as vital and necessary as when it was formulated in the critical period of the struggle against nazism and fascism. None the less, it is incumbent upon all of us candidly to recognize that all is not well in the Organization in the present circumstances.

68. I alluded earlier to the crises that we are now experiencing. It is true, of course, that since its inception the Organization has been buffeted to and fro and has gone through many trying periods. We have experienced various crises of confidence and disenchantment. We have been able to come through those crises.

69. However, what we are faced with today is more serious. Some Member States are questioning the very legitimacy of the Organization. Some assert that United Nations deliberative organs have ceased to honour the principles of objectivity, sobriety and fairness. It is even being suggested that those organs have served as instruments for the exacerbation of conflicts rather than for promoting understanding and reconciliation among States. Others bemoan the prevalence of double standards and the absence of consistency in decisions. The imposition of collective sanctions is judged to be totally effective in certain situations but is assessed as impracticable and counter-productive in others. Surely, such perceptions, even though they may not be totally accurate, do not enhance the credibility of the Organization.

70. But the time is long past for name-calling, for blaming one another, or for pointing accusing fingers in efforts to dissect the ills of the United Nations. What is required at this critical juncture is a time to pause, to reflect deeply and to re-evaluate the direction in which we must move if the Organization is to regain its credibility and full acceptance. This is not the time for fractious rhetoric, nor is it the time for facile or evasive answers or, indeed, ostrich-like behaviour. We should be united in our conviction that the United Nations remains an essential human instrument in the conduct of international relations. And, within the context of this conviction, we should examine our actions and systems in order to bring about whatever reforms are necessary to achieve the objectives for which the Charter was designed.

71. Obviously, this task will not be easy. Our ability to tackle successfully certain perennial issues on the agenda will markedly influence our chances of success. Let us hasten to grapple with an issue that continues to baffle the overwhelming majority of Member States. In accordance with its Charter principles, the United Nations is firmly opposed to the *apartheid* policy of the South African régime. However, there are those who appear to be disturbed by what they refer to as the majority's obsession with South Africa. The United Nations cannot, morally, coexist with *apartheid*. It is a diabolical policy that inevitably corrupts the people and the State that practise it. *Apartheid* not only robs Africans of their basic human dignity; it is also a device that imposes a patently unacceptable white minority rule in South

Africa. Just as peace is indivisible, so also is the defence of freedom and democracy indivisible. It is indeed alarming that those States which take pride in their own free and democratic Governments do not realize that the policy of *apartheid* rudely negates every tenet of a true democracy. How can democratic principles gain wider acceptance if a State that crushes the central principles of democracy is treated as an ally by other States founded on democratic principles?

72. We are continuously urged by some to exercise the maximum patience and restraint, and we are called upon to allow South Africa a breathing space to put its house in order. The response of the United Nations should be unequivocal. We are not impressed by any tinkering with the system of *apartheid*. Constitutional change which fails to deal with the legitimate rights of the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa deserves neither the support nor the acquiescent tolerance of the Organization. Acrobatic diplomacy that seeks to befuddle a gullible world community ought not to be seen as an appropriate demonstration of flexibility. The fundamental moral issue in dealing with *apartheid* in South Africa is clear, and, until the United Nations takes a categorical and uncompromising decision to combat racism and *apartheid*, the credibility of the Organization will be in question.

73. As I intimated at the beginning of my statement, the magnitude of the achievements of the United Nations in outlawing colonialism is enormous. On a personal note, I am privileged to serve as your President because of the new international norm against colonialism which the General Assembly enunciated in 1960. Nevertheless, there is a stubborn hold-out: South Africa continues to defy the international consensus on Namibia.

74. More than six years have elapsed since hopes were raised about the early attainment of Namibia's independence. The South African régime has demonstrated great acumen in its evasive diplomacy, and this has not been matched by any serious effort to implement fully Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Instead of a determined effort on all sides to secure South Africa's compliance with that resolution, we have witnessed vain attempts to link the independence of Namibia with extraneous issues. Meanwhile the agony and travail of the Namibian people continue. It is essential that we co-operate in redoubling our efforts to expedite the implementation of the United Nations plan with a view to enabling the people of Namibia to enjoy the freedom and independence which they so much deserve. In the mean time, I hope that the General Assembly will continue to give its strong support to the South West Africa People's Organization.

75. On the Middle East crisis, the wide divergence of views, as well as the profound emotion that this crisis has produced in our deliberations, have, regrettably, poisoned the atmosphere of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the search for peace in the Middle East remains an essential responsibility of the Organization. At a time when it is fashionable to belittle the achievements of the United Nations in that region, we should never forget the vital role which the Organization has played there since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Yet, today the Organization has little or no influence at all in the joint efforts to find a just and lasting settlement. It is significant, nevertheless, that only the United Na-

tions, in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, has outlined the principles for an equitable solution to the problem. Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions provide a framework for a peaceful settlement. In tackling the Middle East problem, greater understanding should be shown of certain basic considerations which cannot be ignored. Under the Charter of the United Nations it is inadmissible to condone the annexation of foreign territory as a result of conquest. Such a practice belongs to the past and should never have a place in the Organization. Equally, every Member nation has the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. Furthermore, the principle of self-determination and nationhood is sacred to the overwhelming majority of Member States, and it is our duty to do all in our power to defend that principle and to ensure its enjoyment by the Palestinian people.

76. There are two major obstacles to the involvement of the United Nations in the search for peace in the Middle East. The first is that one party to the dispute is apprehensive that it would not be treated even-handedly by the Organization. The second is the lack of meaningful co-operation between the major Powers towards the attainment of United Nations objectives in the Middle East. Surprisingly, it is often forgotten that the special role of the United States and the Soviet Union in efforts to promote a just and durable peace in the Middle East by agreeing that the peace conference on the Middle East should be under their joint chairmanship was underlined in December 1973. The General Assembly, in its resolution 31/62 of 9 December 1976, reaffirmed that arrangement. It is therefore difficult to imagine any combination of circumstances that will produce a lasting settlement in the Middle East without co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Let us hope that those two major Powers will commence serious consultations at an early date to remove the remaining obstacles to the convening of a Middle East peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

77. It is not beyond the capacity of all concerned to work out, in an imaginative way, the appropriate modalities, such as those relating to representation, timing and agenda. In the final analysis and given the complexity of the issues as they exist in the Middle East, only a comprehensive framework offers the prospect of a solution that would satisfy the divergent interests of all the parties concerned.

78. We must recognize the fact, however, that for the United Nations to play an effective role in the Middle East and in the resolution of many political disputes, some change of direction is needed in its deliberative organs. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, in 1982, and on subsequent occasions, has made extremely appropriate remarks in this regard. There is no doubt that, in the pursuit of difficult negotiations, decisions in the deliberative organs of the United Nations can make or mar such negotiations. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that in certain situations we should minimize the deep frustration and feeling of helplessness that have encouraged Member States to continue to raise specific issues in all forums of the Organization and to adopt repetitive resolutions.

79. What is required now is a return to that period of the history and development of the United

Nations when the formulation of decisions was an effort requiring close consultations with all those concerned. In this connection, it is vital that we show greater respect for the decisions of the Organization. When Member States perceive that United Nations decisions will not be implemented, there is less likelihood that the formulation of decisions will be given careful consideration. Lack of adequate consultation in the formulation of decisions in turn brings disrespect and non-compliance with such decisions. Here we should see clearly that we have entered a vicious circle, which undermines the effective functioning of the deliberative organs and diminishes the power and credibility of the entire United Nations.

80. From the perspective of the public at large, it has been almost incomprehensible that the United Nations has not been able to play an effective role in either containing or resolving many ongoing regional conflicts, even though those have often entailed enormous loss of human life and of national opportunities. Is it not within our capacity to find just and lasting solutions to conflicts such as those in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, the Gulf and Central America? More often than not, the perceived complacency of the Organization has baffled the average man and woman in the international community. Perhaps they take more seriously than their Governments the declaration in the Charter that the United Nations was established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Even though we ought to be grateful that the world has so far been spared the terrible consequences of a nuclear exchange between the super-Powers, we should equally be disturbed by the death and destruction that have resulted from regional conflicts.

81. It is true that in many instances those bitterly engaged in regional conflicts or civil strife have shown reluctance to make use of the available international machinery for the resolution of the conflicts. It may even be true that the misuse of the veto power in the Security Council, for example, has discouraged parties to such conflicts from turning to the United Nations. Nevertheless, if we are to revive and strengthen the credibility of the Organization, it is imperative that we reflect on how best to adapt our working procedures and approaches in the crucial area of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

82. It is of interest to recall that the United Nations has in the past made necessary adjustments in order to overcome an obstacle limiting its ability to assist States in the resolution of disputes. Even the much-discussed misuse of the veto power was tempered, at the very beginning of the Organization, when an abstention by a permanent member of the Security Council was interpreted as not constituting a veto. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has used the provisions of Articles 98 and 99 of the Charter in an imaginative and effective manner which has enabled him to offer his good offices to Member States in the pacific settlement of disputes. This procedure has allowed the Organization to play a constructive role in tackling certain serious political disputes at various times in the past. But, by its very nature, the use of good offices requires each party to a dispute to accept the offer of the Secretary-General. It is therefore incumbent on Member States to show a greater degree of readiness to make use of the good offices of the Secretary-General, who has been elected as the custodian of the Charter principles for the protection of international peace and security.



83. Another adaptation made by the Organization in the past relates to the peace-keeping machinery of the United Nations. When it became obvious that the collective security procedures of the Charter were encountering difficulties in their full implementation, new peace-keeping approaches came to the rescue. These have demonstrated their usefulness in many regional and international conflicts. Those Member States that have always been willing at great sacrifice to contribute men and material to the United Nations peace-keeping forces deserve our highest commendation and respect. It is, however, most regrettable that in certain instances when there is a developing consensus that United Nations peace-keeping forces could be of use in a given situation, that option is frustrated by the lack of consensus in the Security Council. In this period of reflection and re-evaluation, it is essential that we again examine seriously how best we can strengthen our peace-keeping machinery—particularly as regards the financing of the operations. We can see on the horizon a number of regional and international disputes that could have a chance of early solution if the parties were convinced that the United Nations peace-keeping machinery would be available as an element in a comprehensive package.

84. It is in the light of these changes and adaptations, which have enabled the Organization to overcome great difficulties in the past, that we should face the even greater difficulties of the present session of the General Assembly. It is also in this spirit that we should look seriously at whatever reforms are necessary to enhance the Organization's capacity to contribute to the resolution of conflicts.

85. In recent years Member States have indicated the importance they attach to the principle of interdependence and multilateralism. In practical terms, however, some have continued to wonder whether this principle is a mere slogan. But, even as a slogan, we are witnessing today a turning away from interdependence and multilateralism. Those who accept this trend have grounded their case in some of the observations I have been making. They believe that the voting patterns in multilateral bodies either do not reflect the distribution of power in the world community or reflect its misuse by a majority based on their sheer numbers.

86. It is, of course, understandable that a State which believes that its policy will not obtain adequate support in a multinational framework may turn away from it. Such a stance is understandable as a short-run policy. But in the long run, such an approach is bound to prove defeatist and inappropriate to the interdependent era in which we live. If we are to tackle successfully numerous problems across international boundaries, we cannot afford to ignore the reality of interdependence and the consequent necessity of multilateralism.

87. This necessity affects political concerns as well as economic and social issues. An overwhelming majority of the members of the General Assembly have become disenchanted by a decreased commitment of multilateral co-operation for development. The prosperity of all parts of the world economic system depends upon improving the social, economic and industrial situation in every part of the world community. The developing countries have, perhaps, taken too seriously a major aim of the world Organization, which is to promote social progress and a better standard of life for all. Instead of enhancing

the capacity of the multilateral agencies to help in the economic development of developing countries, we are witnessing cut-backs in multilateral aid and even threats to deprive specialized agencies of necessary funds because of political stands that these agencies take on particular issues. It is not far-fetched to state that our inability to reach common ground on global negotiations is primarily due to the tendency to move away from multilateralism and to ignore the interdependent nature of the world community.

88. Yet at the present time, as I have said earlier, we are faced with an even greater challenge to multilateral negotiations, namely, the need to manage the enormous debt of developing countries. In this connection, it is vital that we recognize the collective responsibility of the international community in dealing with the debt situation. Both debtor countries and those providing the loans must sit together to work out appropriate arrangements to ease the debt problem. Unless this is done urgently, there is a large measure of risk of devastating breakdowns in global financial arrangements. Those that have acquired enormous debt should not bear the sole burden, since decisions taken outside their borders, whether in the form of increased rates of interest or of new import controls, have significantly affected their ability to service their debts, thus curtailing development which is essential for external balance. Equally, the burden of meeting their obligations may tempt them to adopt measures which may restrict international trade. Consequently, a multilateral approach is of the highest importance in dealing with these and other similar problems. In this regard, it is of the highest importance that we give serious consideration to the re-evaluation of the present international financial system as well as examine seriously in what direction the present world economic system is taking Member States, particularly the developing countries.

89. The international community has shown greater inclination to exercise its responsibility in providing relief and rehabilitation assistance in situations resulting from man-made and natural disasters. However, the response has not always been uniform. Many countries have been ravaged by several years of severe drought and continue to face critical food shortages, causing famine in many instances. The flow of many millions of refugees and displaced persons remains a serious concern, especially against the backdrop of the very inadequate resources generated by both the first International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held at Geneva in April 1981, and the Second International Conference, held at Geneva in July of this year. There is, therefore, a pressing need to go beyond relief and rehabilitation assistance to tackle the problem on a sustained and long-term basis.

90. Let me, in summary, return to the central themes of my remarks. It is, unquestionably, a Herculean task to construct a legitimate, stable, just and enduring world order. This task has engaged the attention of the ablest of statesmen in the modern international system. And yet this system which is emerging to meet the objective realities of an historically unprecedented interdependent era is, in fact, of a very recent origin. We have only begun to build the structure of peace required for the years to come. Clearly, this effort deserves our collective commitment and sustained support. In fact, the categorical

imperative that we should not flinch from this responsibility is now as clear as it has ever been.

91. If we take only a few moments to ponder deeply and reflect on the present state of international relations, particularly the relations between the super-Powers, we recognize the urgent need to do all in our power to strengthen the foundation of world order and stability. We may be euphoric enough to congratulate ourselves for having prevented, thus far, a thermonuclear war. We may also, with confidence, point out the various fail-safe devices designed to obviate an accidental nuclear exchange. None the less, we should never underestimate the enormous danger presented to humanity as a whole by these apocalyptic weapons of terror. Humility requires that we bear in mind the fact that human error, misperception and miscalculation could trigger off that which none of us desires—a nuclear holocaust.

92. Reflection on the history of modern international relations should give us some cause for concern. A major characteristic of this period is the alternation of periods of relative peace with periods of war: 40 years of relative peace from 1815 to 1854, 44 years of peace from 1871 to 1914, 20 years of peace from 1918 to 1939; and now we are about to conclude another period of 40 years of the avoidance of war between the major Powers. We should not lose sight of the fact, however, that while we have been fortunate in avoiding war between the super-Powers we have failed in the control and resolution of regional conflicts. Not only have these conflicts persisted among many small and medium-sized States, but also they have frequently involved one or more of the major Powers. In this connection we have not grappled with the need for conventional arms control with even as much effort and effect as has been applied to nuclear arms control.

93. In contemporary international relations we should take some comfort from the fact that the determination to avoid global war has gained expression in a pronounced growth of public knowledge and concern in many parts of the world. It was in this context that General Assembly resolution 37/16 of 16 November 1982 declared 1986 the International Year of Peace. It is to be hoped that that year will provide a focus for stimulating concerted action by Member States and non-governmental organizations to promote peace on the basis of fuller implementation of the decisions of the United Nations.

94. Where, it may be asked, does the United Nations fit into our collective effort to build a just, stable and legitimate world order? The United Nations still represents a central building-block for strengthening the foundations of world order.

95. I have attempted to review candidly with representatives the dilemmas in which the United

Nations finds itself today. These dilemmas, however discouraging at times, make possible a better appreciation of what is required to ensure the greater credibility of the Organization. We have all become wearily accustomed to an avalanche of accusations against the United Nations as a wasteful international instrument that is of only marginal value. Such criticism of the United Nations, even when it is partly justified, can become a dangerous pastime. No Member State should become so much engrossed in the pursuit of its own immediate national interest that it fails to recognize that the United Nations is the only available international institution which has a reasonable chance of ensuring that right does not yield to might at all levels of international society.

96. Let those who mightily foster opposition to the Organization take note that, clearly, the world would become a more dangerous place without the United Nations. Instead of dismissing the United Nations or contemplating withdrawal from it, we should focus on those aspects of the Organization which provide windows of opportunity to build a more peaceful international society.

97. As we open the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly we are witnessing a vivid demonstration of the uniqueness of the United Nations. We have been able to attain almost universality of membership; we have been able to make the General Assembly truly a parliament of nations and a forum for humanity. I may add that we should avoid any step that would vitiate the principle of universality of membership. Within these walls we have Member States that either are ancient enemies or are now engaged in fierce combat. Contacts among representatives at the Assembly may yet provide a framework for serious, meaningful dialogue between the super-Powers, a development which would unquestionably be welcomed by the world community, since it is the super-Powers which hold our destiny in their hands.

98. As we prepare to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations we need a rebirth and a renaissance. We have the instrumentality, so we must have the will. We have the dangers, so we must have the courage to overcome them. We have the Charter, so we must have the capacity to implement it. We have examples of international anarchy, so we must develop ways and means of controlling it. Our path is open. My message is one of hope. My words are an echo of deep-seated aspirations everywhere. The United Nations must press forward in dignity and effectiveness, with streamlined mechanisms and revitalized will to achieve the hopes of the peoples of the world today. There shall be no slide-back. Let us together seize this opportunity. Let us begin now, lest we later find that we are too late.

*The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.*