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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 October 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Alfredo Félix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador
- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Mr. Pedro Verona Pires, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde

Statements made by

Mr. Malile (Albania)
Mr. Ricardo Garcia (Dominican Republic)
Mr. Lopez Contreras (Honduras)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. ALFREDO FELIX CRISTIANI BURKARD, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of El Salvador, His Excellency Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President CRISTIANI BURKARD (interpretation from Spanish): I should like first to express our most sincere congratulations to you, Sir, upon your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We are certain that your wisdom and experience will enable this momentous gathering to follow a path that will lead to success at a time when very promising prospects of international understanding are emerging and when all the countries represented at this forum of universal harmony will be focusing on examining and discussing the many practical and tragic problems now facing mankind.

I join in the appreciation expressed to Mr. Dante Caputo for the excellent manner in which he performed his task as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

This is a fitting occasion to emphasize here, at the Headquarters of the United Nations, our appreciation and admiration for the tireless and successful efforts made by the United Nations to contribute to peace, harmony, reason and development throughout the world. The efforts of the United Nations are bearing fruit at last. With the assistance of the overwhelming majority of the Member States and with the progressive development of the machinery of the United Nations, we see how it is having a beneficial impact upon mankind, increasingly anxious to live in harmony and co-operation. We note with particular appreciation the outstanding role played by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose career and achievements are a special source of pride since he is an outstanding Latin American figure.

We have come, for the first time, to the rostrum of the United Nations filled with emotion and a sense of confidence in order to tell the world the truth about our country, the truth of a people which has suffered and is continuing to suffer from the devastating tragedy of an armed conflict that has gone on for 10 years now. During that time, in striking contrast, our people have managed to build democratic institutions which are unquestionable today, even to the most sceptical or most stubborn opponents.

Those who wished to lead the international community to believe that our Government would represent a historic set-back for El Salvador, today, four months after we came to office, have to compare their distorted intentions or mistaken analyses with our attitude and our actions. In due course we shall refer to that attitude and those actions, but first we wish to re-emphasize, before the universal conscience, our philosophy and our vision of the present and of the future.

No one who is even slightly familiar with the situation in our country can be unaware that the main challenge facing all Salvadorans today without exception is

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the final achievement of peace. We, elected by an overwhelming majority on 19 March of this year, fully grasped this need for peace and reconciliation for our people, and we took up the historic challenge of promoting peace by peaceful, democratic means.

We inherited a shattered national community, a country oppressed by the violence that had gone on for more than 10 years and an economy in ruins, a ruinous State control and systematic destructive activities of extremist forces, together with a land crying out for the restoration of its spiritual values and creative and productive energies. Our commitment, from the very first day we took office - on 1 June - was to accept the responsibility of rebuilding and rescuing the entire society, leaving no one out and giving special treatment only to the poorest of the poor.

In the face of the breakdown of our national community, we set out to work for the unity of all sectors in society, so that no one felt left out of the national destiny, so that no group, entity or sector might feel it enjoyed pre-eminence beyond the rules of harmonious democratic law.

From the very first day of our administration we said that we intended to govern, not to rule, because we consider that the people of El Salvador deserve the utmost respect and total devotion of their Government, given my country's institutional maturity and great historic sacrifices. In this we have the firmest, most responsible and profound conviction: we are exercising power by the authority of the people, obtained in free elections that no one has challenged. Today and every day during our administration we shall put this power to the service of peace, progress and freedom for all Salvadorans. We foster the unity of all sectors of the country - political, social, entrepreneurial and labour - so that, with all due respect for the differences that are fully appropriate in a pluralistic

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democratic process, nevertheless, we Salvadorans can overcome the breaches resulting from bygone violent confrontation.

Against this violence, which took advantage of the socio-economic shortcomings and the institutional mistakes and omissions of the past in order to disguise their ideological fanaticism, we are pitting political reason, measured co-ordination and patriotic arguments within the framework of democracy. This is a reality experienced every day in El Salvador. It is feasible to achieve power by peaceful, civilized means whereby the Salvadoran people, which alone holds the right to sovereignty, is free and enabled to elect to office those who offer sufficient guarantees of honest, responsible work directed to the attainment of justice, legal security and the well-being of all.

Imbued with our sense of the obligation to seek social harmony, to preserve peace and tranquillity and the safety of the human person as a member of society, we extended our hand to the insurgents inviting them to return to a peaceful role in our society where all ideological trends have their place today. Our wish for dialogue and our serious pursuit of peace are there for all the world to see.

Our proposal for permanent, continuing, substantive, committed dialogue was met by an initial negative response by the insurgents. Then, as we outlined our commission for dialogue, they again refused. But, convinced of the need to exhaust all channels to achieve a political solution to this bloody conflict, we were prepared to find the necessary patience to achieve the first approaches. Without any arrogance or useless anger, we waited for a positive response. That finally came with the first meeting for dialogue between the Government and the FMLN 100 days after we took office and after some two years of stalemate in the dialogue.

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We are deeply gratified to be able to inform the international community today that on 13, 14 and 15 September the first formal accord between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN was achieved. It lays down the guidelines for permanent dialogue whereby substantial understanding, making possible the total solution to the conflict in the shortest possible time, will be brought about.

The Mexico agreement is historic and significant because it sets out a framework whereby it is possible, through agreements, for groups that are still using weapons to have recourse, instead, to peaceful means to make their political proposals to the Salvadoran people.

That achievement is not something we view as a personal triumph. We are presenting it to the international community as a first fruit of a new way of governing in El Salvador, free from hegemony, demagoguery or fanatical passions. We would repeat here in the General Assembly what we have repeatedly said to our own people: as far as we are concerned, we have clearly defined principles of freedom and democracy and no Salvadoran is our enemy, and no one should be persecuted because of the fact that he is our adversary.

We are therefore required to fulfil the law and comply with the law, but we also intend to modernize and develop not only our laws but also the administration of justice at all levels of society. We are quite aware that achieving peace will be no easy undertaking. It will require sustained and vigorous effort. But we are also aware that our people will not be prepared to accept failure which would unduly delay further the attainment of peace. Time will tell, so we will wait and see.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

Consequently, at our next dialogue, on 16 and 17 October in San José, Costa Rica, we shall be making a proposal for the complete cessation of hostilities, to bring an end to the shooting within the spirit and letter of chapter III of the Tela Agreements signed in Honduras by the five Central American Presidents in their efforts to achieve firm and lasting peace in the area.

We are not simply proposing a de-escalation of armed conflict; we think that that would mean merely a gradual reduction in the suffering of the Salvadoran people. That suffering - unjust, prolonged and terrible - must be brought to an end once and for all because there can be no moral or political justification for it. Like all men of good will we feel that fratricidal conflict, nurtured and sustained by ideological fanaticism, is the most irrational and hateful form of human rights violation. We have a clear commitment to respect and foster the human rights of the individual, a goal we reaffirm emphatically here today - and I should like my words to be heard around the world. We invite all political and social forces in our country, irrespective of their ideological hue, to join with us in this transcendental task of restoring full harmony in El Salvador on the basis of reasonable discussion, civilized procedures and a serious commitment to development, without which it will not be possible to achieve stable and lasting peace.

To foster this development, which is so necessary and urgent, our Government has commenced a process of gradual economic adjustment based on the modern concept of liberalizing our economy, making possible the reactivation of productive mechanisms and releasing the creative energy of free enterprise. This wide-ranging programme is coupled with a lasting programme for social development which will help the most needy and vulnerable to take part in the drive for development. We do not wish to be systematic benefactors of the indigent but, rather, to equip them

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with real opportunities so that their poverty can be gradually eliminated. We know that this is a long-term and complex task. It is tantamount to the thoroughgoing economic take-off of an entire country. But if we do not set about this now as a practical, feasible task we shall never find the momentum to overcome the enormous effects of our crisis. Our economic approach is consistent with the new, liberalizing trends flourishing around the world. We are abreast of the times, and that will enable us better to face the clear needs and legitimate requirements of a society that is yearning for a life of peace, freedom and solidarity.

We cannot aspire to the attainment of such a goal of collective humanism without a substantial effort to restore the spiritual and moral values of our land, shaken to the very roots by the scourge of armed conflagration. We are undertaking deep educational reforms to make education more effective and enlightening. We are incorporating at all levels the theoretical and practical lessons of human rights and duties, so that future generations of our land can grow up with feelings and convictions that will enable them to respect each other, to accept healthy criticism, to enjoy a democratic life and to love God and their homeland, and to have a deep sense of the need for universal coexistence.

In that respect, we hope the Assembly will approve the draft international convention on the rights of the child at this session so that the children and adolescents of today and tomorrow can live in a more human world. Today we are witnessing the sad reality of the so-called children of war. That is why we are fully aware, personally, that the work of protecting and fostering children's rights must be an immediate task if the harmonious world that we wish to see tomorrow is to be brought about.

Over the past 10 years the conflict in Central America has been a subject of concern and anxiety for the international community. It was thought that it might give rise to an even greater crisis affecting world peace and security.

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However, since the signature of the Guatemala Procedure, the Alajuela Declaration and the Declaration of Costa del Sol, and, most recently, the summit meeting in Tela, the situation has gradually changed. There have been substantial changes in the political climate and new and better possibilities have emerged for the restoration of peace.

There is no doubt that world détente has had an impact on Central America since it has been understood that confrontation and war are not solutions to any problem; that, on the contrary, instability and tension generate irreparable loss of life and do not contribute at all to improving the lives of our peoples. As Central Americans we are aware of our historical responsibilities, are taking the active role which we alone can take and are adopting our own decisions to resolve our regional crisis.

The determination to achieve, and the real possibility of achieving, political solutions to our problems has demonstrated the illegitimacy of the use of force and violence. That is why the peace efforts have received constant support from the international community - most recently the Security Council's firm and unanimous support in its resolution 637 (1989) of 23 July this year. Today the way is open for further significant and valuable steps to be taken by the Secretary-General to foster peace and democracy in Central America, consistent with the wishes of our peoples as expressed in the commitments entered into by our Presidents.

We are convinced of the need, feasibility, timeliness and legitimacy of the Esquipulas Procedure. I wish to emphasize here that we shall continue to fulfil the obligations that we entered into there. We want a firm, lasting peace. That is why we have accepted and constantly supported the establishment and dispatch of the United Nations observer group in Central America. It will be an extremely significant element in the verification of compliance with the agreements,

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particularly those with respect to support for and/or provision of territory to armed forces which destabilize legally constituted Governments. We urge the forces outside the region to respect the manifest will of Central Americans. They would thus be contributing to peace and democracy and the creation of an atmosphere compatible with reconstruction to assist our peoples.

We consider the absence of democracy to have been the root cause of social and political conflicts in Central American countries and we also feel that regional peace is intimately linked to the procedures of national and democratic reconciliation. For that reason we hope that political developments in Nicaragua will result in honest, untainted and open elections in which the Nicaraguan people will have a real possibility to exercise their inalienable right to choose their Government freely and, with equal freedom, to determine the system of Government most compatible with their national interests. We appeal to the international community to lend all due attention and assistance so that in the forthcoming elections in Nicaragua the desired objective can be attained.

Understanding our problems and requirements, and in an act of fellowship which serves to strengthen the peace process in our region, the international community has extended support for the measures for Central American economic co-operation drawn up by the United Nations in co-operation with our Governments. We sincerely appreciate this collaboration inasmuch as progress towards these goals will also signify progress towards the solution of some of the most critical problems affecting the countries of Central America.

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At the same time, the Government of El Salvador wishes to place on record its appreciation to all those countries that have expressed their support for the peace process in Central America. Our thanks go to the donor community, which has played an active role in humanitarian and development activities. We thank also the relevant United Nations bodies for their work leading to the Central American Conference on Refugees, and for the special co-operation we have received from the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We re-emphasize the value and significance, for all Central American nations, of co-operation and international assistance for the attainment of peace and development. We urge the international community to strengthen economic, technical and financial co-operation with Central America. Peace and development in our region will represent a further contribution to the attainment and consolidation of world peace and security.

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, goes our special appreciation for the help he has extended to the Central American Presidents working to assist our peoples.

In respect of the international economic situation, we are bound to regret that the economies of the developing countries have failed to make progress towards resolution of the main problems that beset our societies, which are constantly in a state of crisis. The traditional problems in the fields of health, housing, unemployment, inflation, marginality, poverty, and so on, have been compounded by other imbalances, such as the fiscal deficit and external debt, which, taken together, make even more difficult the process of economic recovery and development in general, and jeopardize the fragile stability and achievements in the political field. It is disturbing that, whereas in some parts of the developed world there is economic growth, conditions in the underdeveloped countries, instead of

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improving, are getting worse, with a widening gap between rich and poor. This confirms the existence of serious shortcomings in international affairs, which must be corrected so that the benefits of development may be distributed equitably. The international community, particularly the industrialized nations, must be aware that if this trend were to continue, the worsening crisis in our countries could, as has occurred in other regions, ultimately give rise to even greater social conflicts, which would ultimately have an impact on the economies of developed nations.

Ours is an overwhelmingly agricultural country that depends to a considerable extent on the production of coffee. We are carrying out an extensive programme to diversify our exports and industry. Nevertheless, coffee continues to be our essential commodity. We therefore wish to make it clear that we feel that renewal of the International Coffee Convention is essential. We have begun a process of economic reconstruction in the midst of continuing conflict. We are deeply concerned, therefore, that there should be recovery in the coffee market. We believe that a just and equitable agreement would be a very promising sign of international harmony and co-operation.

With respect to external debt, which is a terrible sword of Damocles hanging over the fragile structures of Latin American nations, El Salvador energetically calls for a solution that will take into account the development needs of our peoples and will show that creditors and debtors are jointly determined to stress the human factor, rather than cold statistics, thus demonstrating that the modern world is applying a philosophy of human rights, not only in respect of actual cases but also in respect of the great international problems.

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In the social sphere, the abuse of drugs, AIDS and international crime, and, at another level, the problems of terrorism and of the environment are subjects of concern to us all, as they have an impact on all nations. However, we welcome the fact, that, finally, their negative impact, and the need for concerted, co-ordinated action by the international community, has been recognized. In view of the scale of these problems, and of their negative impact on the development of our societies, we must give urgent attention to them. We must do our utmost to achieve positive solutions.

With respect to the specific issue of drug trafficking, we have heard here a dramatic appeal by the President of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, who called for international co-operation. He asked the international community to endorse and support energetically his plan for joint action to eliminate this frightful scourge, which is undermining institutional life in our nations and ravaging our young. We firmly and earnestly support that urgent appeal. Indeed, we are prepared to support any measure, programme or collective step to combat this particularly inhuman and destructive crime. Just as we would reject any expression of terrorism, whatever the argument or pretext employed, we equally oppose drug trafficking, which, as President Barco Vargas rightly said, is a scourge that affects us all.

Despite international détente and the progress that has been made in the resolution of a number of problems, there continue to be trouble spots that represent a threat to world peace and security. In all cases of conflict, we urge the parties involved to seek political understanding, making due use of the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and resorting to the facilities of the United Nations system, as on previous occasions when the Secretary-General has done vital work leading to the adoption of measures to resolve disputes. In this context, I wish to refer specifically to the case of Korea and to make it

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clear that my Government shares the view that it is essential that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in permanent dialogue and establish the contacts that are necessary to strengthen mutual trust. Thus they could end all forms of hostility and confrontation and, finally, achieve peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the principle of universality to be found in the United Nations, we consider that the Republic of Korea possesses the essential elements of a State and that it has all the elements qualifying it for membership of the United Nations. That is an aspiration that, indeed, we support.

I have come to this rostrum, from which have been heard the great voices of our times, to convey our humble but steadfast hope for peace and concord in El Salvador as a contribution to the enormous international movement against violence, dogmatism and intolerance. The walls are tumbling - north, south, east and west. We see this as a final freeing of minds around the world - an intense hope for an age in which the force of the spirit will become, once again, the driving force of history. The Government of El Salvador respectfully calls on the international community not to identify us with stereotyped vignettes, but, rather, to judge us by our attitudes and our actions. We want peace, freedom and justice in our long-suffering country, but we will never renounce any of the fundamental freedoms necessary for representative, pluralistic democracy to survive. We are not excluding anybody. We do not seek to pin the blame on anybody for his political ideals, but we call energetically on all to join us in building peace, as a demonstration to our own people, and then to the world, that we are a Government of peace, work and service.

We hope to return here next year with good news of lasting peace in our country. But that does not depend only on us; we seek agreement that will unify

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the entire society of El Salvador. We, for our part, will do our utmost to avoid further bloodshed in our land. Every day we remember the words of the Carpenter of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world, who, from the hill above the Sea of Galilee, in the brief sermon that has been left for mankind, said to the multitude:

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

(The Holy Bible, Matthew 5:9)

THE PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the important statement he has just made.

The President of the Republic of El Salvador, Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY COMMANDANT PEDRO VERONA PIRES, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAPE VERDE

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Pedro Verona Pires, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde, Commandant Pedro Verona Pires, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. PIRES (Cape Verde) (spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation from the French text furnished by the delegation): I am very pleased to greet you, Sir, and offer you my warm congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Your election to this high post is recognition of your wide-ranging experience as a political figure and a diplomat. I am certain that in this very complex but fruitful period in international life you will be able to guide our work with the competence, intelligence and dynamism required to tackle the many issues on our agenda.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the admirable, wise way in which he guided the work of the forty-third session.

I wish also to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose skill in carrying out his functions has time and again shown his unstinting devotion to the cause of peace and the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The progress made in the peaceful solution of

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

regional conflicts is due, in no small measure, to his experience and his enlightened approach.

In the course of this century, never have prospects for understanding and co-operation among peoples been as promising as they are today. Détente in the relations between the great Powers and the significant reversal of the cold war and of ideological confrontation, as well as the progress made in the negotiations on disarmament and in the negotiated solution of regional conflicts, proclaim a new philosophy of coexistence between States leading to greater confidence and better understanding, thus signalling the advent of a more secure future for mankind.

Indeed, all signs indicate that we are heading towards a new order in international relations based, we hope, no longer on ideological confrontation between systems, nor on the strategic interests of domination or zones of interests, but rather on the plurality of interests of States and the safeguarding of the just aspirations of peoples to justice, liberty, well-being and development.

In this context we are pleased with the results of the recent summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which, after an exhaustive analysis of the international situation and the changes occurring in the world, considered ways to solve the problems confronting the international community and determined a framework for future action to make it possible for mankind as a whole to meet the challenges of the next millenium.

Recent developments in the international situation give us cause for optimism. A new message of peace and a renewed quest for negotiated solutions are emerging. This new situation will favour the promotion and safeguarding of the national interests of States, in particular the small States.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

We now have a unique historical opportunity, and hence, all possible efforts must be made to consolidate the current positive trends and make them irreversible, thus ushering in a new dimension in relations among States.

There is no doubt that important steps have already been taken in this direction; however, there remains a need for greater confidence and bolder actions.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

All countries should be able to make their contribution to building peace. In this context, we would stress the importance of the United Nations as a vital institution in which global problems affecting all mankind can be discussed and resolved by the joint efforts and action of all Members.

All the fundamental questions have been considered in the Assembly, which is undoubtedly a truly democratic forum. Here all countries, large and small, can speak of their concerns, their aspirations and their fears.

That is why the Organization is useful, as a factor in the political and cultural liberation of peoples; in peace and disarmament; in defence of human dignity and human rights as well as international legality and security; and in the promotion of co-operation and assistance for economic and social development.

The United Nations certainly contributes to the formation and strengthening of a new universal conscience, which, being based on international law and legality, defends the solidarity of peoples; the equality of cultures; tolerance and pluralism; and the common destiny of mankind.

It is in this universal conscience that the small countries find their main support for the strengthening of their independence, security and development. This universal conscience is also the basis of the extraordinary achievements of the United Nations, and in particular of the General Assembly, where peoples of all cultures, races and religions come together and where the objective of universality becomes a practical reality.

This universal conscience is revolted by the violence and catastrophic wars of this century, whose horrors should always be present in our collective memory, to remind us that conflicts between States are not resolved by force of arms, particularly in a period of great technological progress such as that in which we are living now. That is why we must support the initiatives aimed at strengthening the Organization.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

Cape Verde has taken a keen interest in the expressions of concern in recent years about adapting the United Nations to today's needs in international politics. The 1986 reform created foundations which, if built upon with respect for the principles and basic purposes of the Charter, will be a positive factor in a process which could lead the Organization to a new stage in its history.

Administrative reform will not in itself guarantee that the United Nations will adapt to meet the needs of today's world. We believe that for such changes to be made there must be a re-examination of the Organization's tasks in order to identify questions which, because of their importance and timeliness, can serve as focal points and catalysts for action.

Until the beginning of this decade, among the Organization's many spheres of activity decolonization was one of its main objectives. For some years decolonization galvanized diplomatic activity at the United Nations and gave it a sense of purpose. We ourselves are the fruit of that very praiseworthy action by the United Nations in favour of peoples. When, in the midst of the national liberation struggle, our immortal leader, Amilcar Cabral, stated that we were the anonymous fighters of the United Nations, that showed the profound influence of the Organization's ideals on the growth of awareness of the basic rights of peoples to freedom and independence.

Today the Organization's actions should be re-oriented around another great objective capable of stimulating its diplomatic activity and elevating dialogue between nations to a new level. The present climate of political détente and the broadening of international co-operation require a multilateral approach to the great issues of our times. The United Nations provides a suitable framework for dealing with them and solving them. Our collective survival is more and more tied to the existence of the United Nations.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

Peace, disarmament and security are concepts so closely linked that each is a vital condition for the others. We need the participation and shared responsibility of all the countries of the international community if we are to have a world of peace and of peaceful coexistence between States. When we speak of peace, we are referring not only to peace between the big countries, or between them and the small countries, but also to peace between the small countries themselves. Without it, how could we call upon the great Powers to promote peace between themselves?

My country, which sees itself as a factor for peace and stability in its geographical region, pays a heartfelt tribute to the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union for the renewed hope of peace that the détente in their relations has brought to mankind. We urge them to continue their efforts to consolidate the results they have achieved and to make them irreversible.

Peace, stability and the ability to see ahead in international relations are the prerequisites for progress and development and for the creation of a world of justice and freedom and the physical and spiritual flowering of the human being.

Experience accumulated over the past 15 years of national independence has taught us the complexity of development, which requires domestic efforts, but also effective and significant international co-operation. If the underdeveloped countries should adopt realistic and pragmatic economic policies and promote the skilful promotion and exploitation of their natural resources, the international community must be able to guarantee programmed long-term assistance that is sustained and predictable.

The economic backwardness and the social and political instability of the third world, particularly of the African continent, demonstrate the relationship between development and peace. To be lasting and universal, peace must be based on a correct evaluation and solution of the problem of underdevelopment.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

As one of the most vulnerable African countries, Cape Verde continues to follow with great concern the situation in Africa. Despite the continent's enormous economic potential, its situation is critical, with grave social consequences that include the fact that hundreds of thousands are falling victim to hunger.

Experience shows that development is above all a national responsibility, that the peoples concerned should be closely involved in the process of development and that our countries will have to review their policies, improve their management methods and promote the necessary reforms in order to benefit as much as possible from their own resources. To achieve physical well-being and guarantee social justice for our peoples, victims over the centuries of economic and social domination and marginalization, many African countries have had to adopt development strategies of the past, or to perpetuate past economic policies which do not meet the conditions of countries emerging from decolonization.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

On the other hand, perhaps we have not been able to find the mechanisms to stimulate and mobilize the creative energies of our populations for the process of development.

The results of the rupture in the traditional structures of our countries could be the underlying reason for the weakness of existing relationships between political power and society. At the present stage in the life of our peoples, any development process requires dialogue and permanent interaction between political power sources and society. Any development process requires technical capacity and professional competence. The lack of adequate human resources in independent African countries has been one of the major obstacles to the development of the continent. The reasons for this are very well known and the impact it has had on African economies is extremely clear today.

On the domestic scene, we think the conditions are now in place for economic development, so long as national efforts are accompanied by effective and substantial international support. For, with the growing interdependence of the world today, Africa's development will require the financial and technological co-operation of the industrialized countries.

It is generally recognized today that foreign debt is one of the main obstacles to the economic growth of the third world countries. Indeed, the foreign-debt burden, which has become intolerable, is the reason for the deterioration of the living conditions of most of our countries and the difficulties we witness in the adoption of appropriate economic policies. Programmes of structural adjustment and other efforts agreed to for the purpose of mobilizing internal resources, including more effective utilization of investments, have not brought about the expected results because of debt-servicing payments.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

The solution to the debt crisis will have to be fair, flexible and oriented towards development, while being based on shared responsibility and broader political dialogue.

The situation, far from being straightforward, is complex and closely linked with the deterioration in the terms of trade, the fall in raw-material prices, the reduction of public aid to development, high interest rates, exchange-rate fluctuations and the net transfer of developing countries' resources to the developed countries, particularly through debt-servicing payments. We appreciate the measures already taken by some creditor countries to alleviate the burden of the indebted countries in serious difficulty.

In the context of the solution which must be found, we should take proper account of the needs of the small and vulnerable countries. Nevertheless, we note with gratitude the international community's praiseworthy contribution to Cape Verde's development process.

The progress we have seen in the area of the protection of human rights shows us that freedom is the best possible context within which to release man's creative energy. For us, human rights are intimately tied to development. They will not be protected by the mere abolition of arbitrary imprisonment or the simple recognition of the right to free expression. Nor will human rights be protected when thousands of persons are still dying of hunger every year, and thousands more in many countries - even developed countries - continue to live without decent housing and assistance when they are sick and old. Only the creation of the material bases for life and the raising of the professional and cultural standards and the level of awareness of the people can stabilize conditions ensuring respect for basic human rights as well as a more human and just society.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

Among the most important problems on the present international scene which we are considering during this session is the question of the environment and the need to protect and preserve it and the question of the link between economic growth and development and the defence of the environment. The interdependence of countries and the need to strengthen multilateralism in this area are clear.

Indeed, the signs of deterioration in the environment resulting in climatic changes, the warming of the atmosphere and the reduction of the ozone layer seem finally to have convinced us of the extreme need for the adoption of collective measures to put an end to this deterioration and improve the ecological conditions of life on Earth.

The deterioration of our environment is of particular concern to us in Cape Verde. Located as we are in a region subject to the harsh climate of the Sahara desert, we have had to wage a tremendous struggle against the onslaughts of nature by fighting the effects of drought and desertification, while at the same time developing an ambitious programme of reforestation. That is our contribution to improving the global environment, and it will prove all the more significant if greater international support is given to us.

We hope that the international community, and particularly the United Nations conference on the environment to be held in 1992, will help us to find appropriate solutions to these problems, because the changes observed in the climate, desertification, the reduction of the ozone layer and the pollution of the atmosphere seriously threaten the lives of all of us and require adequate and effective measures, as well as effective international co-operation, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Because of the human suffering, poverty and the uprooting of populations and the resulting despair, we cannot remain indifferent to the difficult, vulnerable

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

situation of millions of refugees and displaced persons in various parts of the world. In Africa, and particularly in the southern part of the continent, the situation is very serious indeed. Continued efforts are required to alleviate the suffering of thousands of human beings who are victims of the instability in the region.

We are gratified at the praiseworthy work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the contributions made by the host countries and the international community towards alleviating the suffering of these many victims. However, we feel that this problem can be solved in a lasting way only when its underlying causes - which result from the combined effects of ethnic, cultural, religious, racial, political and other types of discrimination - are eliminated.

Another question with which we are concerned is the urgent need to put an end to the traffic in and illegal use of drugs, which have reached alarming proportions and are extremely difficult to control. In view of the harmful effects of the use of drugs, with the resulting increase in the crime rate, the international community must exert co-ordinated efforts to fight this scourge, which is a true crime against mankind. We therefore support all the efforts to eliminate this evil from the face of the Earth.

With respect to southern Africa it seems to us that, after the long and arduous struggle of the Namibian people for the independence of their country, illegally occupied by South Africa, we have finally arrived at a decisive moment with the progress made in the process of implementing Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Once the initial problems are overcome, we hope that the process will lead to truly normal and free elections this November that will culminate in the independence of Namibia. We are convinced that South Africa, whose credibility is

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

at stake in Namibia, will be able strictly to comply with the timetable and other conditions laid down in Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the implementation of which will be a victory for all: for the people of Namibia, for the African continent, for the international community in general, and for the United Nations in particular.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

Another fundamental question that must be dealt with by the international community is the need to persevere in the search for ways and means to create conditions that will facilitate and accelerate the elimination of apartheid and bring about a just, democratic and well-balanced multiracial society in South Africa. In this connection we encourage all anti-apartheid forces and all those, both within and outside South Africa, who favour change to continue increasing pressure on the Pretoria régime to bring it to enter into negotiations with the legitimate representatives of the South African people in order to dismantle apartheid and achieve agreement on the measures necessary to change the country into a non-racial democracy. In the new society, where all will benefit from the same political rights regardless of race, culture, colour or creed, all people must enjoy universally recognized human rights, fundamental freedoms and civil freedoms.

Therefore, within the framework of a strategy to eliminate apartheid, which is of concern and interest to the international community and the African countries in particular, there is a message of hope and confidence that should give everyone a reason to struggle for change. That message should be directed towards the forces that advocate change as well as those that oppose it - to the African countries and the anti-apartheid forces in the rest of the world. This is the great challenge now facing Africa and the international community. By taking up that challenge we shall take a considerable step towards the avoidance of future violence and the strengthening of peace and international security.

In this context the People's Republic of Angola and the People's Republic of Mozambique have adopted courageous measures to allow peace and stability to return to our two sister countries. We are certain that the international community as a whole, out of respect for the sovereign rights of those countries, will support those efforts, whose sole objective is the achievement of dialogue, understanding and peace.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

One feature of contemporary international relations is the emergence of small States on the world scene. Most of them have come into existence over the last 20 years as a result of the decolonization process successfully carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. Most of them have small territories, small populations and limited resources, as well as little political influence, small military forces and modest economic capacities. Many small States are island States, and vulnerable. They have specific needs that must be appropriately assessed and addressed in order to find the necessary solutions to their problems.

Politically and strategically, those States tend to favour neutrality. The structural problems resulting from their physical dimensions and the instability caused by dependency require a stable environment in which the international community has an important role to play to safeguard their security and assist in their development, thus creating conditions in which they can face and master their destinies with greater confidence, effectiveness and predictability.

The small States can play a useful role in international relations precisely because they have neither the multiple interests nor the strategic ambitions of more powerful States and can thus make a positive contribution to international peace and security.

We should not like to conclude without referring to another phenomenon that affects the small States: the question of ethnic and cultural minorities, which has become more acute in recent times. As a small country in a growing community of some 150 States having different sizes, degrees of power, economic capacities and objectives, we are very sensitive to the question of the ethnic and cultural minorities, whose rights and guarantees of rights are often denied. That is why we reject any form of racial and social discrimination and defend the international legal order in a multiracial and multicultural world that should give broad safeguards and guarantee those rights for all.

(Mr. Pires, Cape Verde)

Despite the tremendous progress made in the area of human rights, effective protection of and respect for the fundamental rights of minorities is an area in which our voices and our actions, tragically, have been violated and have failed. That is why we in Cape Verde are deeply concerned by events in various regions of the world in which the rights of ethnic minorities are violated flagrantly and systematically. The spiritual wealth of mankind lies in its ethnic and cultural diversity. When the culture of a minority is repressed or its existence threatened we all lose, because that constitutes an attack on the fundamental rights of man; and when a culture is suppressed or disappears, that is an irreparable loss. The ethnic and cultural minorities deserve the full protection of the United Nations and the international community in general.

As a peace-loving country whose people are striving for development, and as a nation which is an integral part of the United Nations family, Cape Verde will continue to make its contribution on the national, regional and international levels to the promotion and realization of the ideals of social justice, to the strengthening of the brotherhood among peoples, and the creation of conditions for prosperity and well-being for all, in a joint universal effort to ensure respect for human rights and the rights of peoples.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Pedro Verona Pires, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. MALILE (Albania) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, I have the pleasure to address to you, Sir, the representative of a friendly African nation, our congratulations on your election to the high office of President of the current session of the General Assembly.

I would also extend my congratulations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, on his efforts and his commitment to strengthening the role of the United Nations in coping with the acute problems of our time in the cause of peace and security.

The Albanian delegation, like the delegations of the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations, has come to this session of the General Assembly with the sincere desire to join its efforts with those of other States for the improvement of the international atmosphere and the promotion of international security. There is no doubt that an open and constructive debate free of reservations and preconceptions about present world developments would contribute to the success of this debate.*

* Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

The Albanian delegation believes that the present-day international situation is complex. In many cases, developments are as contradictory as they are fluid and unstable. They are characterized by a relaxation of tension in some areas and an increase in others, while the settlement of a problem in one region is accompanied by the emergence and exacerbation of problems in another. The current political dialogue in the relations between the two super-Powers, which has found concrete expression in their agreements on a number of minor arms reductions or in their steps to eliminate certain hot-beds of regional conflict, have led to a relative easing of tension. Efforts are frequently made to portray this as a qualitative change in present-day international relations or as an irreversible trend towards international peace and security, a new era. But past experience and present developments force us to recognize that the present relaxation of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union is no guarantee that threat of war has been eliminated. Today, interference in the internal affairs of others has increased under various pretexts and threatens to upset the balance, with incalculable consequences.

Albania is in favour of improving the atmosphere and easing the tension in Europe. It is for peace and the strengthening of security on our continent. The ways these problems are regarded and the paths leading to their solution may differ from State to State, but it is essential that the policy and concrete actions of each of these States help to attain that goal. We feel that Albania, by pursuing a fully independent policy outside all blocs and permitting no foreign bases and troops on its territory, has done and continues to serve the cause of security and peace in Europe.

In the field of disarmament, too, the agreements between the two super-Powers are minimal and have not affected the enormous arsenals of weapons of every sort in their possession. Declarations of impressive proposals and counter-proposals

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concerning deep cuts of up to 50 per cent in strategic weapons cannot conceal the arms race, which continues, or the manufacture of new generations of ever more modern and sophisticated weapons. So true is this that we now have good reason to state that the dividing line between the dangers of nuclear arms and the dangers of conventional arms has almost disappeared. We believe that the problems of disarmament can be confronted and set on the road to solution through the collective and individual efforts and actions of all States.

At a time when the arms race continues, when hot-beds of tension and crisis persist, the interests of peace call for the adoption of effective measures towards disarmament, the dismantling of political and military blocs, the removal of foreign bases and the return of foreign armies within their national borders, and the cessation of all interference in the internal affairs of other States.

From time to time the super-Powers set forth new theories and political doctrines, as well as ideas and models, which they seek to impose on others, presenting them as almost universal criteria for the development of democratic processes, and which they attempt to establish, in one way or another, as pre-conditions for relations between States. Albania maintains that peoples and States must be free to choose their own paths to sovereign development, to preserve their national identity, and to play their rightful role in the course of world events.

Albania is and always has been in favour of a democratization of international relations that would allow all States, large and small, to make their voices heard. In light of that necessity, the role of the United Nations in international affairs becomes even more significant. As the experience of the past two or three years has shown, the commitment of the United Nations to solving certain critical problems is an indication of the potentials and importance it can have when it plays its true role in accordance with the Charter. We believe that the important

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problems of our time should not be left for discussion by only a narrow circle of States or to a dialogue by the super-Powers; rather, they must be brought to the United Nations. That would confirm the weight and power of the international community.

It is certainly in the international community's interest to avoid regional crises and conflicts, since these constitute hot-beds of tension exacerbated and manipulated by others against the interests of the peoples. Thus, it is the parties directly involved and concerned in these conflicts and crises, and not external forces, that should play the decisive roles in settling them. Short-term solutions, especially those imposed from without, cannot endure. In our view, the formula of "national reconciliation", applied under the tutelage of the super-Powers, leaves the door open for interference and destabilization; the case of Afghanistan is an example of that. In the interests of independent development and peace, interference in Central America and South-East Asia must cease, and the solutions to their problems must conform to the aspirations of the peoples concerned. Similarly, the Korean people must not be prevented from achieving the reunification of its homeland free from outside interference.

As a Mediterranean country, Albania considers that any step towards the creation of a favourable political climate in the Mediterranean requires the withdrawal of the super-Powers' fleets and warships. That step would help to make it a sea of peace and friendship among the peoples of the countries that border on it, and a bridge of co-operation with the other regions of the world.

When we speak of the Mediterranean, we cannot help thinking of Lebanon, which is living through a veritable tragedy. Israel and the forces of reaction have imposed on it a lengthy fratricidal war with extremely serious consequences. It is for the Lebanese people itself to establish its own national unity in all sovereignty. In the Middle East, the Arab peoples have been fighting against

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imperialist-Zionist aggression for several decades. Standing out in that context is the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people, bearing living witness to the dauntless efforts of a valiant people that cannot be conquered by violence or tanks, nor by the genocide practised by those that commit aggression against it.

The Albanian people and Government have always felt close to the fraternal Arab peoples and their just struggle. We regard the proclamation of the Palestinian State and its international recognition as a very important development, offering greater possibilities for the settlement of that key problem in the Middle East. The uprising of the Palestinian people - the intifadah - which has been going on for nearly two years in the occupied territories, enjoys the unreserved support of the Albanian people as a legitimate struggle. The Albanian people has also hailed the positive steps towards the strengthening of unity in the Arab world, which it considers to be a decisive factor in the just settlement of the Palestinian problem and of the Middle East crisis as a whole.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

Against the background of developments and endeavours to achieve political settlements of conflicts and hotbeds of tension the cease-fire agreement in Angola and the agreement on the granting independence to Namibia cannot fail to have a considerable impact on the over-all situation in the southern part of the African continent. The Albanian delegation condemns the violence and crimes of the South African régime, which continues to persist in its detested colonialist policy of racial discrimination.

The Albanian people support the African countries in their just struggle against imperialist neo-colonialist exploitation. We associate ourselves with the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to strengthen its unity in support of the struggle of the Azanian people to put an end to the hated apartheid régime in South Africa, an anachronism in the modern world that constitutes a challenge to all mankind.

Looking back over the development of events in the world since the last session of the United Nations General Assembly, we witness an intensification of internal contradictions in a number of countries, the negative consequences of which extend far beyond national borders. Multinational States, which are a reality in today's world, cannot speak of genuine democracy so long as they fail to achieve democratic relations among the nations, nationalities and minorities that comprise them. If an aggravation of inter-ethnic relations is being observed today, that shows that in those States ethnic or national issues have not been properly addressed.

Albania has always maintained that minorities, wherever they may be, should enjoy equal rights with the rest of a country's population, in keeping with the norms of international law. We have always maintained that minorities should be important factors for rapprochement and friendship between peoples and States.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

Recently a process of co-operation has begun among the countries of the Balkans. The meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Balkan States that was held last year has been followed by a number of other activities of a political, economic, scientific and technical character. That process constitutes a positive trend that reflects the fundamental interests of the peoples of the peninsula and the cause of peace in the region and in all of Europe. The peoples of our peninsula aspire to and need peace and understanding, co-operation and friendship, and not destabilization and mutual animosity.

The Albanian Government will work tirelessly to ensure that that process does not come to a halt but that it is, instead, advanced and consolidated. We hope and we wish that the other Balkan countries will do likewise, overcoming certain recent developments that run counter to the spirit of understanding and to the commitments undertaken within the context of Balkan co-operation.

Albania has never interfered - nor does it intend to interfere - in the internal affairs of other States. However, prompted by a sincere concern about the fostering of Balkan co-operation and confidence, as well as out of a sense of moral justice and on the basis of democratic and other humane considerations enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in other international instruments, my country cannot fail to mention the tragic events that occurred in Kosovo in the spring of this year, along with the repression of the Albanians and their national democratic rights, events that continue today and that are in defiance of every norm of freedom, of democracy and of social and cultural emancipation. The Albanian Government and people - along with world public opinion, including that of sound Yugoslav circles - have condemned and continue to condemn the killing and imprisonments of hundreds of thousands of Albanians who are calling for equality and for the same rights as are enjoyed by fellow-citizens in their federal state and for the retention of their autonomy, language, culture and national traditions.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

White papers or yellow literature may be produced, but they cannot justify the fact that the law in Kosovo is made by tanks and policeman or that, following the constitutional amendments, the number of Albanian schools has been reduced and the Kosovo intellectuals and youth are being persecuted. The so-called differentiation, which in fact constitutes isolation, an unprecedented and inhuman moral, economic and political boycott, has affected the best-known intellectuals, academicians and teachers, down to the schoolchildren themselves.

Albania has been and remains directly concerned to ensure the stabilization of the situation in Yugoslavia, since the freedom and independence of both countries are linked. Any evil in one country affects the other. The normalization of the situation in Kosovo, the national and economic emancipation of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, where they make up an entity of some 3 million inhabitants, and recognition of their equality of rights with the other national groups and nationalities of the Federation, would serve to strengthen Yugoslavia itself.

The interests of the peoples of the region require that the bitter legacy of the past be overcome and that no new difficulties be added; instead, real efforts should be made to improve the friendly atmosphere and to strengthen fruitful co-operation.

As has been announced, in the autumn of next year the second meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Balkan States will be held in Albania. It is our desire that, through the concerted efforts of all States of the region, facing up to present-day realities, that important meeting will mark a new and more advanced stage in our work towards multilateral co-operation and strengthened relations of good-neighbourliness. We are sure that that will be the case. We regard good-neighbourliness as the expression of mutual obligations and of the desire and interests of our peoples and countries to live in peace and friendship with one another.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

Albania, which has sincerely committed itself to the process of Balkan co-operation, regards it as a realistic alternative for strengthening peace in the region. It considers that, as a part of Europe, the Balkans, which has suffered so much from feuds, upheavals and wars, needs peace, tranquillity and stability today more than ever in order to overcome the bitter past and the region's relative backwardness when compared with the rest of the continent, as well as to demonstrate our region's interest in, and contribution to, the development of positive European processes compatible with peace.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

An important aspect of the democratization of international relations which is making itself felt greatly today is that of economic relations on the world scale. Inequality in trade exchanges, the imposition of protectionist measures and tariff barriers and the widespread use of the loan mechanism by the developed industrial countries have widened the economic gap between them and the developing countries. The fact that this situation persists and is worsening is directly affecting the stability of international relations, in which economic relations - more so today than ever before - are inseparably intertwined with political relations.

It is not easy to understand appeals for détente and for the strengthening of international security when some industrialized countries are becoming richer and richer by exploiting developing countries, among others, and the developing countries are becoming poorer every day. Nowadays, when the question of human rights has become a subject for concern and a burning issue to the extent that it has become politicized in the extreme, even in cases which involve individuals, can one really put any faith in the concern expressed when a blind eye is turned to the fate of the millions of people in various parts of the world under threat of famine? The demands of the developing countries - which are frequently referred to as the "poor men's club" although they represent an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States - for equality to be established in international economic relations are legitimate, should be heard out and proper answer made to them.

The illicit trafficking in and the use of drugs have now become a social problem and social evil in many countries. The phenomenon has never occurred in Albania and is not occurring there now. A healthy tradition and educational measures apart, the State, through strict laws, provides for severe punishments for the illegal use, possession and sale of narcotics. At the same time, Albania has taken steps to block any possible traffic in drugs throughout its territory.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

We think that the fight against drugs should not be used as a cover for particular political designs.

In our time, ecological problems have become extremely acute, and the danger resulting from the pollution of the environment has increased even more. It is now an acknowledged fact that the most serious ecological damage due to pollution on the world scale is being caused by the superindustrialized countries, which are the greatest consumers and processors of raw materials. The concern in this regard is all the greater when one is aware that some of these countries are dumping their technological wastes, some with radioactive content, in developing countries.

Albania, which is itself demonstrating the greatest concern to protect the environment within its own territory, including the Adriatic region, joins with those other countries which are rightly demanding that those who are most responsible for pollution should feel obliged to improve the situation and solve the problem.

For the Albanian people, which has had a centuries-long struggle for its territory, freedom and existence, the safeguarding of its independence and full national sovereignty is sacred. With the principle of independence at the foundation of its policy, Albania has at the same time made its modest contribution to the cause of peace and security. It has established and maintains fair, fruitful and friendly relations with the great majority of countries, which is why our country has felt and still feels that it is an integral and active part of the international community.

The reality of Albania in the 45 years since Liberation and the changes and progress made in many areas are the happy outcome of the socialist course it has taken. The fact that the population has tripled over these four decades while

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

average life expectancy has increased from 38 years at Liberation to 72 years today is proof of the far-reaching economic and social changes that have been made in my country.

We are well aware that, despite everything our people has done in Albania through the labour of its hands and the sweat of its brow, we are not at the end of the road, but the important thing is that we are convinced that our road is the right one and opens up to us the prospect of continued progress.

Wishing that the work of this Assembly should be conducted in the most constructive spirit possible and to the benefit of peace, the Albanian delegation will not fail to make its contribution towards attaining this goal.

Mr. RICARDO GARCIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish):

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to return to this rostrum for the forty-fourth session of the Assembly and to address it on behalf of my country, the Dominican Republic.

It is also a matter of great satisfaction to me to convey to Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba the warm congratulations of the Dominican Government, and of our delegation in particular, on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this great gathering. I look forward confidently to his complete success in this sensitive undertaking inasmuch as he is a skilled and seasoned diplomat from a region which is undergoing a steady process of growth and development - a fact that can be observed in the importance and the scope of the Convention concluded between the European Economic Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, better known as the Lomé Convention, the progress of which we have been following in our country with much interest and with a great feeling of solidarity. His

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Republic)

outstanding personal qualities will ensure that the work and the deliberations of this session will be guided with due deliberation and the highest aims. In this respect, he can count on our resolute co-operation.

This is a suitable opportunity to express our high esteem for that outstanding Argentine internationalist, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his exemplary guidance of the work of the last session.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,
Dominican Republic)

On this solemn occasion we should like to place on record our great appreciation and admiration for the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the valuable, timely and unstinting work that he has been doing to promote peace and understanding among the peoples and nations of the Earth.

At the beginning of my statement I should like to thank the representatives for their attention to my sincere message of goodwill from a part of the globe that has been called upon to play a major role from the time of the arrival in the New World of the visionary, the admiral of the seas Christopher Columbus, a portentous event that changed the course of history.

Hispaniola has had the honour of having its capital Santo Domingo, as the headquarters of the first administrative, religious, cultural, scientific and economic institutions of the American continent.

From this confluence of cultures, ethnic groups, customs and traditions on Hispaniola, the first voices were raised in defence of the indigenous races, which formed a new and juridical concept of equality and justice among human beings, through jus gentium, the law of nations, in which one can find the true roots of modern international law, and as a result, the distant origins of the international bodies designed to ensure the observance and effectiveness of the inherent rights of the human person.

Under that auspicious beacon, in this lofty body in which all the nations of the world are represented with their own particular characteristics, we are again meeting in a yearly pilgrimage to find peace. But this ideal, which is so difficult to express in specific terms, cannot be fully achieved unless it is by

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means of open and respectful, but firm and conclusive, dialogue, with a view to putting an end to terrorism and drug trafficking, in whatever form or under any pretext.

It is natural that any undertaking directed towards limiting the arms race and eliminating deadly weapons should be seen as a comforting and encouraging example. That is the case with respect to the agreement on the limitation of strategic weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was jointly announced by Secretary of States James Baker and Minister for Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze. Special mention should be made of the plan proposed at this session of the General Assembly by the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, to rid the Earth of the scourge of chemical weapons, a proposal that was welcomed by the Soviet Union. These positive steps, which demonstrate the will of both super-Powers to reduce the causes of tension and disagreement, will have a favourable impact on world politics in the coming years.

Once again, I should like to recall that the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean nation, is aware that its development is indissolubly linked to that of our neighbour, Haiti, and of the other countries of the area. Our trade with those countries had been minimal despite the geographic, ethnic, historic and economic bonds that unite us. Hence our Government has begun an energetic movement towards integration with our Caribbean brothers, since we are fully convinced that it is only by means of joint, united efforts that we shall achieve the goals that will bring us full development for our peoples.

With regard to the tragic situation in Central America, our country reiterates that it is interested in co-operating in the search for a speedy and most fitting solution of this conflict. We categorically support the agreements that have been entered into in the search for peace by the five Central American Presidents - the

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Esquipulas II Agreements and the Playa del Tesoro Declarations - aimed at achieving a peaceful negotiated solution to the Central American crisis. The recent Tela presidential summit demonstrates that there is hope that peace can be achieved, for peace is the essential prerequisite for the solution of the political, economic and social problems of the region.

The Dominican Republic has noted with particular interest the events occurring throughout Africa, not only because of its impact on international policies, but also because the African race is part of our own ethnic and cultural substratum. We stand in solidarity with the African peoples and participate in efforts to solve their problems, which are similar to those facing all developing countries. The situation in southern Africa continues to be explosive, with unforeseeable consequences for peace and security in the area; its prolongation has an impact on international stability.

Security Council resolution 435 (1978) contains the basic elements for a just and lasting solution of the question of Namibia. For almost 20 years the South African apartheid régime has been illegally occupying the Territory, in defiance of all the relevant United Nations resolutions. We defend Namibia's fundamental right to self-determination.

The delegation of the Dominican Republic believes that the system of government in South African breeds violence, injustice, oppression, inequality and discrimination - in other words, everything that flies in the face of the ideals behind the founding of the United Nations. The eradication of apartheid and independence for Namibia will create the necessary conditions for a return to peace in southern Africa.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,
Dominican Republic)

We call for the cessation of the growing hostilities between Syrian forces and Lebanese Christian soldiers. Despite this escalation, the efforts for peace that have begun recently give us hope for a definitive solution of the conflict.

The situation in the Middle East, which is of great concern to all nations of the world, has a direct impact on Dominicans, because among our ethnic groups there are many people with Palestinian, Syrian, Arab and Israeli roots, with the resultant influence they bring to our national life.

The Dominican Republic has been concerned for several years about the situation in the Korean peninsula. Our country has supported the view that Korean affairs must be solved peacefully by means of dialogue between the two Koreas. The Republic of Korea must be admitted to membership in the United Nations in keeping with the principle of universality. Its entry into the Organization would contribute to reducing tension and promoting peace in north-eastern Asia. The Dominican Republic has viewed favourably the formula for the unification of the Korean community that was proposed recently by the Government of the Republic of Korea to promote peaceful coexistence between the south and the north of Korea.

The serious and tragic situation in many developing nations makes it imperative for us urgently to adopt effective and concrete measures to improve the living conditions of millions in the third world. The presence in this important gathering of a growing number of Heads of State or Government from those countries is clear proof of the world-wide interest and expectations regarding the results and conclusions of this session, which has also brought together representatives of the most powerful and developed countries of the world.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

The situation of the nations of the third world is so critical and paradoxical that their economies are constantly stagnating or actually deteriorating. There will be no improvement until more favourable conditions are provided for access by our export products to the developed countries' markets. If that goal is achieved, and if the developing countries receive better treatment in negotiations regarding their external debt from the creditor nations and entities, we shall have an opportunity, with the impetus of this necessary co-operation, to embark energetically and optimistically upon the path of our development.

Thus, it is obvious that the solution to the general problem of the external debt cannot be achieved with the ways and means that have been used to date, since in most cases they do not allow for economic growth and therefore subject peoples to impoverishment and social upheaval.

The international community, aware of the intricate nature of this problem, which is not merely economic in nature, recognizes that the United Nations has the competence to seek a solution in the political sphere.

The position of the Dominican Republic was defined graphically by His Excellency Mr. Joaquin Balaguer, the President of the Dominican Republic, in his speech at the opening meeting of the Twelfth Annual Conference on Investment, Trade and Development, held in Miami, in the United States, in November of 1980. He said:

"The goal set forth in Berlin for the third-world countries is not to pay the public debt but, above all, to achieve sustained economic growth and an increase in per-capita income that will guarantee our dispossessed masses the right to eat, to clothe themselves, to educate their children and to live under a decent roof. In other words, the third-world countries face two challenges - not one, as was said in Berlin. The first is to live; the second, to pay".

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

Since terrorism continues to affect all nations to such a degree and with such tragic and disastrous consequences, sowing fear and insecurity, a strong, internationally co-ordinated plan must be adopted to combat it more firmly and thereby ensure its eradication.

One of the most criminal and frequent forms of terrorist action is the attacks against passengers, flights and airports. Such attacks are increasingly stirring the universal conscience.

The Dominican Republic strongly condemns the subversive activities of international terrorism, which is carried out indiscriminately against mothers, innocent children and the ill - in other words, against life itself, the most precious thing we own.

The alarming problem of drugs has reached such dimensions, it terms both of production and of trade and consumption, that our delegation wishes to place it on record that the Dominican Government is struggling with all the means in its power to deal with this social evil that is spreading like a flood. For that purpose our courts have been imposing increasingly severe sentences on drug traffickers. Publicity has been given to this throughout the country with a view to ensuring that drug users and traffickers are aware of it and that people understand the evil and disastrous consequences of this illegal trade.

We also give our moral support to the battle which is being waged by countries throughout the continent and whose development we are following with great interest.

At this difficult historical time of conflict, with acute, burning problems that I have mentioned in this statement - to which my colleagues in the Assembly have been good enough to listen with attention - there have been signs of détente and an improvement in international relations above and beyond diverse criticism or positions. I should like to express on behalf of the Government that I have the

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

honour of representing and on my own behalf, our fervent desire to see concrete form given to the ideals and principles that led to the establishment of the world Organization, in which mankind has placed its hopes for a better future in which the ethical and spiritual values that underlie our civilization prevail.

Mr. LOPEZ CONTRERAS (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): I feel very honoured to be here once again to speak to the General Assembly on behalf of the Government of President Jose Azcona.

I should like to begin my statement by extending to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. I am certain that your abilities and your experience will be decisive in ensuring the success of our deliberations.

Forty-five years ago my country came to the city of San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter, convinced that the new Organization would play a major role of maintaining international peace and security and ensuring respect for human rights and the promotion of individual and collective progress.

As time has gone by, our faith in the Organization not only has survived intact but has grown because of its achievements. I need only recall the extremely important work done by the United Nations in the field of decolonization and in promoting the codification of international law, as well as the efforts to ensure better standards of living for mankind.

But it is in the area of the maintenance of peace that the major efforts of our Organization have been most obvious. This work has been made possible by the concerted action of Member States and the most commendable activities of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. It has also been facilitated by the new climate of relaxation of tension which seems to prevail in the world.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

Today, the Government of Honduras again expresses its belief in the United Nations and repeats its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Organization, convinced that it will continue to play a crucial role in the attainment of our common goals.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

For many years mankind has been divided by ideological confrontations deriving from the cold war - the most obvious example of the conflict between East and West. Furthermore, in addition to the real threat of open confrontation between the super-Powers, there have been many localized conflicts in various parts of the world.

Against this disturbing backdrop, we have seen with concern how vast economic resources have been spent on a ruinous arms race. And yet the new climate of détente augurs well for a fundamental change in international relations that could bring the end of such struggles.

The coming to power of a new generation of politicians in the Soviet Union has opened up prospects of major changes occurring in that country as well as other countries of Eastern Europe.

In fact the pragmatism demonstrated by that new leadership is changing the attitude of some Marxist Governments which now seem to be searching in the Western World for the authentic values of freedom and democracy, including economic concepts which not too long ago were being rejected by those régimes.

There is no doubt that respect for the human rights and political and social freedoms of the individual is the sine qua non for the material progress of mankind. Consequently, concerted international efforts must be intensified in order to ensure such respect.

Today the major features of democracy - such as free elections, freedom of expression and the right to organize political parties - are developing more fully in various parts of the world to a greater or lesser degree. We have witnessed the demolition of some of the ideological walls built in the past which represented an effort to protect a political system that had proved inoperative because it was unable to provide the citizens with the rights that it supposedly upheld.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

In view of those political changes it is difficult to understand how in some countries of the world there can still exist Governments attempting to impose - by force of arms in many cases - and to export régimes based on doctrines and ideologies which have been recognized as not viable by those who used to advocate them.

The changes taking place in several Eastern countries may well contribute to peace in the world. Encouraging such changes and their consolidation and extension is in the interests of mankind as a whole. In this context, perestroika is welcome.

Last year when we addressed the Assembly, we said how pleased we were at what had been done in obtaining peaceful negotiated solutions to some of the most difficult and bloodiest conflicts. We mentioned inter alia the end of hostilities between Iran and Iraq and the progress achieved in the negotiations for Namibian independence and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Namibian territory. We would also like to see the end of the odious policy of apartheid. We welcome the return to their country of origin of the foreign troops that were in Afghanistan, an indispensable step for national reconciliation and effective self-determination for the Afghan people.

We are also pleased at the decision reached by the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to begin contacts which, we hope, will lead to a solution of their dispute in relation to the Malvinas.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be a focus of international tension. Although the Camp David agreements gave us hope for movement towards peace, unfortunately there has been no expansion of dialogue in the area. There is the possibility of a properly structured international peace conference on the Middle East, and such a conference might well be the key to the solution of this conflict.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

My Government wishes to associate itself with the concern expressed by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II in regard to the most distressing events in Lebanon. The world is powerless before the violent and continued destruction of that country, which was once an example of peaceful coexistence among communities with different religions. My Government is ready to support any resolution that could bring an end to that heart-breaking tragedy.

In early June the whole world watched stupefied at how the Government of the People's Republic of China responded to a peaceful student demonstration with violent repressive measures. The bloody events of Tiananmen Square, followed by executions and incarcerations, deserve universal condemnation.

It has been the practice at the United Nations that the right to self-determination referred fundamentally to peoples under colonial rule. That right, however, is in no way limited to those peoples, nor is it circumscribed to a given political situation which is now vanishing. Indeed, when the right to self-determination is invoked, emphasis is put on the ability of all peoples freely to choose the type or form of Government they deem best for themselves.

The basic concept is therefore free choice which, as set forth in resolution 1541 (XV) adopted by the General Assembly in 1960, must be carried out

"... through informed and democratic processes, impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage. The United Nations could, when it deems it necessary, supervise these processes." (resolution 1541 (XV), Principle IX)

In the light of that principle, each State is bound internally to guarantee to its own people the exercise of the right to self-determination. Paradoxically, we frequently see how this right is violated through a twisted interpretation in order to crush the popular will.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

In this context I wish to mention that at the twenty-first consultative meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American continent I stated our concern over the serious irregularities that occurred in the elections in the Republic of Panama, which led to a disregard of the popular will expressed in the ballot boxes and to the establishment of a de facto government in that country.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

We again express the hope that the International Conference in Paris on the question of Cambodia will mark the beginning of a dialogue that can lay the bases for a just and lasting settlement of that conflict. The people of Cambodia must be enabled, without foreign intervention, and as soon possible, to determine their own fate.

On the question of Western Sahara, my Government supports the resolutions of the General Assembly calling for a referendum that will permit the people of that country to decide what future is best for them.

On the Korean question, my country advocates, and would encourage, negotiations between South Korea and North Korea towards a peaceful solution of their differences. In accordance with the principle of the universality of the United Nations, we reaffirm our belief that all nations that subscribe to the principles of the San Francisco Charter should be able to become part of the United Nations family should they so desire. In particular, we support the Republic of Korea in its wish to join.

On the situation in Central America, to which I shall refer later in greater detail, I want to point to the significant developments in the efforts to solve the crisis. The summit meeting held by the Central American Presidents in Tela, Honduras, concluded with the signing of major agreements, whose implementation will guarantee the process of normalization in Central America.

Today, more than ever before, mankind is aware of the serious challenge posed by illegal drug trafficking and its consequences. A few years ago, in another international forum, the delegation of Honduras spoke about the dangerous link between political terrorism and drug traffickers. We said:

"... typifying the abhorrent phenomenon called narco-terrorism, that inexorable enemy of youth in particular and of mankind in general, is that it

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

tends to destroy, bit by bit, the physical and moral integrity of our peoples in order to reach its treacherous goals. The promoters of this vile business own sophisticated equipment and machinery; they have international contacts and a strong defence apparatus which enables them to confront their respective Governments and authorities. Our Organization cannot remain aloof from these repugnant actions, and must take initiatives not only to condemn them firmly but to make available to Member States the legal instruments necessary for the prevention and punishment of such crimes."

Drug trafficking must be attacked in all its aspects. Production and processing facilities must be destroyed, and demand and use must be eliminated or at least reduced. If that is achieved, the countries serving as bridges, which, owing to their geographical location, are usually the real victims, will be cut out of the crime routes, thus putting a stop to the enormous illicit profits from money laundering, which can have a dangerous influence on States at different levels of the power structure.

In this connection, we welcome the initiatives of the President of the United States of America and other Heads of State to fight this problem through a programme to reduce drug use and to assist other Governments to stop drug production and trafficking. My Government again states its determination to do its utmost to contribute to the eradication of this scourge. We express our solidarity with the President, Mr. Virgilio Barco Vargas, and Government of Colombia in their efforts.

Last year the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/169, which established the international decade for natural disaster reduction. My country, conscious of the enormous material and human losses caused by such disasters throughout the world, was one of the sponsors of that resolution. In this connection, one is

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

reminded of the hurricane Hugo, which recently devastated various Caribbean States and part of the American mainland.

It is clear that concerted international action can encourage the adoption of measures to reduce the damage done by natural disasters. For such action to succeed, however, it is necessary to strengthen civil-defence structures and institutions charged with study, prevention, assistance and rehabilitation.

I take this opportunity to restate my Government's recognition of the efforts of the United Nations in the field of international co-operation. In this connection, the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should be singled out.

The difficult economic situation faced by Central American countries - including, of course, Honduras - has worsened because of the drop in the prices of traditional export products, the burden of servicing foreign debt, and increased protectionism in various parts of the world. In addition, political tension and conflicts affecting the Central American isthmus in the last decade have discouraged foreign investment and tourism. I feel that this situation cannot be solved unless the Central American States take joint action, with support from the international community. The agreements signed by the Presidents of the Central American countries to put an end to the crisis in the area and the welcome they have received have resulted in important international initiatives.

The launching of the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America is the result of concerted action by the international community. It supports commitments by the Central American countries themselves to try to improve the standard of living of their peoples and to achieve social justice as the foundation for firm and lasting peace.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

My Government has participated actively with other Governments in the region in work related to the launching of the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America, which is being carried out under the auspices of UNDP. We hope that that forum can be used as an additional means of dialogue to channel the necessary resources for promoting development, strengthening the democratization process, and ensuring peace.

In the context of Central America, I should remind the General Assembly that Honduras has to provide temporary shelter for the very large number of people immigrating irregularly because of violence in other countries in the area. More than 60 per cent of the national territory is covered by forest, and, already, almost all the fertile agricultural areas are taken up.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The demographic pressure of this enormous illegal immigration, which accounts now for 10 per cent of the entire Honduran population, has contributed greatly to the establishment of a slope-type agriculture that has led to a deterioration in our environment; and catastrophic effects over the medium and long terms are to be expected unless measures are taken to control this migration. Conservation and re-establishment of the ecological balance are an absolute priority for the survival of mankind.

At the international meeting on Central American refugees, held in Guatemala late in May this year, the Government of Honduras set forth the following criteria underlying its refugee policy. The problem of refugees in the area is and must be a temporary one. The refugee phenomenon is political in nature. This implies that its solution will be possible only if political and social conditions are created which can encourage and facilitate the return of refugees to their countries of origin. For this to be feasible, the international community must encourage measures to strengthen normal institutions guaranteeing the rule of law and peace in all countries in the area. We believe that international assistance to resolve this problem must be provided in proportion to the sacrifices made by countries that have taken in refugees, and the efforts by the countries of origin to expedite the repatriation of their citizens and nationals. Until voluntary repatriation actually occurs, Honduras will guarantee the security of refugees in the country, subject to total respect for its sovereignty, the security of its own population and the application of its legal régime. We feel that Honduras has been forced to pay too high a price for the violence occurring in neighbouring countries, as we took in flows of refugees in numbers far beyond our nation's capacity.

It is time for those countries that have generated the refugee flows to assume the responsibility of solving their own domestic problems, so that the necessary conditions may be established for their citizens to return home.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

For the decisions of the International Conference on Central American Refugees to take effect, along with the meeting on donations this past July in Geneva, within the framework of the Special Programme for Central America, it is essential that the international community lend its political and financial support to the work being done by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

My Government would restate its position on the urgent need to find a prompt and reasonable solution to the foreign debt problem of the developing countries. The weight of debt-servicing slows down development, and it is a serious obstacle to the implementation of democratic objectives. In this respect, we agree with what was said by the Council of Ministers of the European Community, which last June in Madrid stated:

"A solution of this problem, particularly in Latin America, is of major importance to the consolidation and strengthening of democracy."

It may seem rather odd, but our developing countries have found greater receptivity and understanding in respect of their foreign debt problems from some of the private banks, while the international development institutions and organizations, of which we are founding members, continue to try to impose on us outdated formulas which have already created explosive situations in several countries.

During the current decade, the Central American isthmus has faced unprecedented events. The unleashing of violence in some countries of the region has led to consequences that have gone far beyond their political borders and affected the area as a whole.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The instability resulting from this situation and the inclusion of the Central American crisis in the agenda of East-West confrontation, and the deterioration of the economic, political and social situation in the area, have made us aware of the great need to find a joint answer to this new situation.

In spite of existing ideological differences, the Governments in the region, from the early part of this decade, began a very complex political dialogue, which today enables us to look to the future with some optimism.

Honduras agrees with what was said at the Contadora talks, namely, that the major contribution by each State to regional peace is the maintenance of its own internal peace. So we agree that the decisive and most important needs are the carrying out of political processes of a true democratic, pluralistic and participatory nature, and the urgent need to ensure better standards of living for our citizens.

On the first matter, I am pleased to say that on 26 November 1989, the people of Honduras will once again go to the polls to choose the government that will lead our nation in the course of the next four years. This democratic exercise, which will take place for the third time in this decade, is another step on the way to the strengthening of our democracy.

The people of Honduras are committed to dialogue, as can be seen also outside our borders, inasmuch as we try at all times to use the procedures for peaceful solutions to international disputes. It is in that spirit that the Government of Honduras has participated actively, from the outset, in the peace processes for the Central American region.

There were two meetings that speeded up normalization in the region: the Costa del Sol summit of 14 February in El Salvador, and the San Pedro Sula

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ministerial meeting in Honduras - San Jose - on 28 February between the European Economic Community and the Central American countries members of the Contadora Group.

On 7 August of this year, Honduras was honoured to host the Central American presidential summit in the port of Tela. At that time, important agreements were signed which have helped revitalize the regional peace process.

The agreement signed at that summit meeting, which took place exactly two years after the signing of "the procedure to establish a firm and lasting peace in Central America", offer hope for a solution to the crisis affecting our region.

In the city of Tela, the Presidents adopted three documents: a political Declaration; a Joint Plan for the voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation of the Nicaraguan resistance and other armed groups; and the extrajudicial Agreement between Honduras and Nicaragua, relating to the suit introduced by the latter at the International Court of Justice in 1986, in a case separate from the regional negotiation effort.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The plan to demobilize the Nicaraguan resistance is essentially based on major progress in the national reconciliation and democratization process to which the Government of Nicaragua is committed. That Government's compliance with its obligations concerning dialogue and national reconciliation is imperative for the reincorporation of those repatriated to Nicaragua into their country's economic, social and political life under proper conditions and with adequate guarantees.

Under the plan, the responsibility for carrying out all the necessary activities for voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation falls within the competence of the International Support and Verification Commission formed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States.

I am pleased to report that the extrajudicial agreement between Honduras and Nicaragua, signed with the moral and political support of the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala, has greatly helped to expedite the regional normalization process, including the establishment of a United Nations group of observers for Central America, made up of specialists from Canada, Spain and the Federal Republic of Germany, to verify compliance by the five Central American countries with the security commitments they have entered into.

Lest the term foreseen in the joint plan should expire with Honduran territory still being used by armed elements from Nicaragua or El Salvador, my Government has already presented a formal request to the Security Council for an international peace force to prevent the use of our territory as sanctuary. We proposed such a force on 12 November 1987 in the General Assembly of the Organization of American States and reiterated the proposal on 4 October 1988 during the forty-third session

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of this Assembly. In addition, Honduras suggested the initiation of a dialogue between the super-Powers on the Central American crisis. As we know, that dialogue has already started, and it holds much promise. However, its final results will be effective only if another political dialogue - between the Sandinista Government and its armed opponents - also takes place.

Another cause of concern for Central America is the situation prevailing in the Republic of El Salvador. In spite of the holding of two consecutive, unchallenged elections and the invitation by the Salvadorian Government to irregular groups to join in the political process, on an equal footing, violence against the people and Government of El Salvador continued until recently.

Despite the dark clouds still hanging over our world, the Government of President Azcona looks to the future with optimism. The rule of law is extending throughout the world, bringing with it justice, freedom and development. If we can reach those goals in the not-too-distant future, we shall be able to proclaim with justified satisfaction that this Organization has achieved the objectives set when it was established and that we, as citizens of the world, have made reality of the ideals that all mankind strives for.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.