



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/44/PV.30
17 October 1989

ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 12 October 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. ADOUKI (Congo)
(Vice-President)

- Address by His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland
- Tentative programme of work
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Tawena (Benin)
Mr. Bemananjara (Madagascar)
Mr. Somare (Papua New Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III, HEAD OF STATE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Majesty King Mswati III.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 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 Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Majesty King Mswati III, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King MSWATI III: May I start, Mr. President, by congratulating you most sincerely on your well-deserved election to the presidency of this, the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that, with your outstanding diplomatic skills, proved experience and undoubted leadership abilities, the Assembly will meet the challenge of its global commitments. On a personal note, we Swazis are delighted that this vitally important job is in the hands of a fellow African, with whose country we have enjoyed excellent, long-standing relations.

I wish also to register my appreciation for all that your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, managed to achieve, while so ably guiding the proceedings of last year's session.

(King Mswati III)

You will be aware that this is my first opportunity to address the General Assembly. No other Swazi King has had such an opportunity. I am very conscious, as I stand before you, of the 44 years of illustrious history belonging to the United Nations. It is a history which has shown, time and again, that the Organization remains the most important multilateral institution for resolving international conflicts. I, Her Majesty the Indlovukazi, and the whole Swazi nation are proud to be identified with such a history, and I can assure you of my determination to lend Swaziland's full support to the Organization's fundamental principles and guiding tenets. The promotion of international peace and security, through full respect for human rights and the dignity of all citizens, remains elemental to our goals and purposes. I therefore note with relief and satisfaction that we meet against a backdrop of a relaxation in the relations between the two super-Powers. I applaud the role played by the United Nations, in this, and in all its efforts in multilateral diplomacy.

With that in mind I should like at this point to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. The international community without question benefits from his outstanding devotion to duty and his boundless energy. His staff too deserve our gratitude. The specialized agencies, and particularly the United Nations peace-keeping forces throughout the world, continue to earn our gratitude and appreciation for work well done in their mission for advancing the cause of human dignity and justice.

I must express Swaziland's concern at renewed evidence of the economic imbalance between North and South. The latest offering of the World Economic Survey of 1989 holds out very little hope to us in the South of any improvement. As a result, Swaziland is an active member of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and the preferential trade area. It is our aim to

(King Mswati III)

counter the imbalance by encouraging our economic community in eastern and southern Africa. Swaziland is a small, landlocked Kingdom. Our economic development depends on a healthy climate of international trade relations. An active regional economic community will provide essential markets and this, in turn, will encourage our producers to diversify and thus strengthen our agro-industrial base. I would welcome endorsement of this policy by our economic partners in development.

I should like to turn my attention now to areas of conflict current in the world today.

The problems in the Middle East continue to cause concern to the people of Swaziland. We sympathize with all involved and would appeal to all parties to exercise maximum restraint. We welcome the call for an international peace conference on the Middle East. We feel that participation should be on an equal footing, with no pre-conditions.

Close to home, I should like to reassert Swaziland's unswerving commitment to the principles of non-racial democracy, non-alignment and complete respect for human dignity, justice and peaceful coexistence with all.

We hope that the South African Government, under its new leadership, will respect the views and rightful expectations of all its citizens. We are encouraged by the new initiatives and can only hope that words are backed up by action.

This time next month Namibia will have elected its first democratic Government. My country prays for a peaceful election process, free from outside pressure. Whatever the outcome, we trust that the monitoring force of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) will ensure that it is the will of the majority that prevails. We look forward to welcoming Namibia to next year's Assembly session.

(King Mswati III)

En route to New York I paid a short visit to our neighbour Mozambique. During friendly and fruitful discussions I assured the President of my resolve to speak out clearly on his country's behalf. The continuing war affects Swaziland in many ways. The refugees fleeing the conflict are of particular concern to us, constituting at least 7 per cent of our total population. Fifty thousand refugees currently stretch our resources in land, finance and employment. While we are encouraged by the response of the international community as a whole, and of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in particular, we feel that the time has now come for the Assembly to give full attention to supporting the process started by President Chissano and carried on by Presidents Moi and Mugabe of Kenya and Zimbabwe, respectively. Let us give real assistance to the people of Mozambique and ease the alarming pattern of emigration, which is threatening to choke the countries playing reluctant host.

(King Mswati III)

Sadly, many other situations of conflict persist throughout the world. Swaziland would welcome the guidance of the Secretary-General and United Nations agencies for their future settlement. I refer to the ongoing situations in Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq, Kampuchea, the Korean peninsula, Western Sahara, New Caledonia, Cyprus, Latin America and Senegal-Mauritania. Our previous successes should spur us on to address today's problems.

Swaziland was saddened to hear of events in Beijing earlier this year. We hope and pray that peace has returned to that city and that the spirit of youthful expression has not been entirely squashed.

It is heartening to be able to share in the enthusiasm of the United Nations for environmental issues. I am impressed by the deep concern of several Member States, which are working within the United Nations system on this agenda. Swaziland is fully prepared to play its part in this vital programme of action. Issues such as deforestation and desertification have particular relevance for us. We support fully all proposals made by the Assembly for an international conference in 1992, to focus on environmental awareness.

In conclusion, I should like to express my firm opinion that the United Nations continues to be the best hope for mankind. We the people of Swaziland are proud to be associated with this august Assembly. Our own policies are dictated by the realities of our situation, and cautious wisdom has always been the Swazi watchword. The Charter of the United Nations is one with which we identify most strongly.

It is my privilege, then, on behalf of all the Swazi people, to pledge our continued co-operation with the United Nations system and its specialized agencies.

God bless you all.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the important statement he has just made.

King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to give members an outline of the tentative programme of plenary meetings for the rest of October and the beginning of November.

On Tuesday, 17 October, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization"; item 27, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity"; and item 24, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System".

On Tuesday, 17 October, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take up item 148, "Observer status for the Council of Europe in the General Assembly"; item 22, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference"; item 23, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States"; and item 8, "Adoption of the agenda and organization of work" - fourth report of the General Committee.

On Wednesday, 18 October, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 29, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte"; and item 15 (a), "Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council".

On Monday, 23 October, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 34, "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives".

(The President)

Prior to action being taken on item 82 (f), "Environment", by the Second Committee, the proposed 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development will be considered on Monday, 23 October, in the afternoon.

On Tuesday, 24 October, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 21, "Achievements of the International Year of Peace"; and item 154, "Operation Lifeline Sudan".

On Wednesday, 25 October, the Assembly will consider item 14, "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

On Thursday, 26 October, the Assembly will consider item 82 (i), "Science and technology for development". In the morning of that day, the Assembly will hold a commemorative meeting for the observance of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development.

On Wednesday, 1 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 17 (i), "Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme"; and item 15 (b), "Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council".

On Monday, 6 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 20, "Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin"; and item 16 (a), "Election of twenty-nine members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme".

On Tuesday, 7 November, the Assembly will begin its consideration of item 28, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa".

(The President)

On Wednesday, 8 November, in the morning, the Assembly will hear an address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, and will take up item 16 (b), "Election of twelve members of the World Food Council"; and item 16 (c), "Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination".

In the afternoon of the same day, the Assembly will resume its consideration of item 28, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa".

On Thursday and Friday, 9 and 10 November, the Assembly will continue its consideration of item 28.

I should like to remind members that every attempt is being made to curtail the duration of the session so that the Assembly can conclude its work by Monday, 11 December, in order that the special session on apartheid and its destructive consequences for southern Africa may take place, as planned, from 12 to 14 December.

Further, I should like to inform representatives that the Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held on Monday, 30 October and Tuesday, 31 October. The Conference will be opened by the Secretary-General.

It is of course understood that reports of the Main Committees will be considered as they become available.

The tentative schedule that I have just announced will appear in the verbatim record of this meeting as well as in the Journal summary. In the mean time, if there are any changes I shall keep the Assembly informed.

The list of speakers for all the items which I have mentioned will be opened at 3 p.m. today.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. TANEMA (Benin) (interpretation from French): First and foremost, I should like to convey my sincere congratulations, and those of the people and Government of Benin, to Mr. Joseph Garba on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. That unanimous choice is a tribute not only to Nigeria, with which Benin has historical, fraternal and fruitful relations, but also to all the peoples of Africa.

Your exceptional diplomatic skills, Mr. President, your perspicacity and the respect and esteem in which you are held by the international community guarantee the success of this session.

Allow me to express my delegation's great admiration for Mr. Dante Caputo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, for the energetic, clear-sighted and effective manner in which he guided the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, both in New York and in Geneva. We pay tribute to him for the wisdom he showed in ensuring that justice and democracy prevailed through the adoption of decisions that have been beneficial to the international community and have enhanced the prestige of our shared Organization.

I take this opportunity also to express my delegation's great appreciation to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for all the work he has done to create more favourable conditions for the restoration of peace in the world, and for his tireless and praiseworthy endeavours to strengthen the role and importance of the United Nations.

The world of today is undergoing profound changes that are being felt in international relations as a climate of détente. Those changes are apparent

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

particularly in the fields of disarmament, regional conflicts, economic relations, and humanitarian and social problems. That was the conclusion just reached by the Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at its ninth conference, held from 4 to 7 September in Belgrade. They stated that:

"Some favourable developments are emerging and spreading in international relations. Conflicts and hostilities are tending to give way to negotiations, understanding and co-operation. It would appear that the path leading to the establishment of lasting peace is opening up".

Indeed, almost two years ago that the United States of America and the Soviet Union ushered in a new era in modern international relations in the form of a fruitful dialogue between their top leaders. At that time, my country welcomed the signing of the Washington agreements and the Geneva negotiations between those two great Powers. It is happy to associate itself with many other countries in expressing the hope that the dialogue that they have begun will continue and that the talks under way between them on strategic weapons will very soon bear fruit, increasing mutual confidence and yielding results beneficial to the whole of mankind.*

The peoples of the world yearn for peace and the people of Benin hopes that the rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union will allow them to speed up the process leading to general and complete disarmament. That is why the People's Republic of Benin supports the international community's efforts to make permanent the climate of relaxation that is so favourable to disarmament negotiations.

* Mr. Adouki (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

Disarmament remains the surest way today of creating an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of lasting peace in the world. But disarmament must be conceived and carried out in a way that will enhance the well-being of mankind as a whole and ensure that the vital balance is struck between the various categories of States that make up the international community. Disarmament should serve development by permitting a significant increase in the resources of countries beset by hunger, disease and poverty.

I am convinced that the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held here in New York in 1987, will free the resources necessary for the economic and social development of the poorest countries, and should promote better living conditions for the peoples of the developed countries. In that respect, the States that have always had doubts about this relationship between disarmament and development should, in a spirit of solidarity with the rest of the international community, join in the consensus that has been achieved.

Once again my country commends the constant striving for disarmament, and welcomes the encouraging results of the Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons held in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989 at the invitation of Mr. Francois Mitterand, President of the French Republic.

Benin hopes that in the near future the work of the Geneva Committee will result in the preparation of an international convention banning the manufacture and use of chemical weapons, which have caused so many atrocities and such suffering over recent decades.

The terrible consequences of conflicts and tensions between countries and the threats of annihilation that beset mankind have impressed on all the countries and peoples of the world the need to achieve peace by means of dialogue and negotiation.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

However, many regions of our world continue to be disrupted by conflicts. In southern Africa, after decades of humiliation and suffering, the heroic people of Namibia is moving towards full sovereignty. My country welcomes the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which is recalled, confirmed and updated by Security Council resolution 632 (1989). All the States Members of the Organization, and especially the five permanent members of the Security Council, should exert all their influence and demonstrate their clear-sightedness in order to keep the resources of the military element of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) at the level envisaged in resolution 435 (1978), as recommended by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the front-line States, the Organization of African Unity, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

The tragic events in Namibia since 1 April 1989 could have been avoided had the forces of UNTAG been larger and possessed more means to control the situation in the field in accordance with the spirit and letter of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Our Organization, therefore, should do its utmost to ensure compliance with the terms of resolutions 435 (1978) and 632 (1989) in order to enable the Namibian people freely to attain international sovereignty. I take this opportunity to express my country's indignation at the assassination on Tuesday, 12 September 1989, of Anton Lubowski, a member of the political bureau of the South West Africa People's Organization and to pay a tribute to the courage of all the leaders of SWAPO, in particular its Chairman, Sam Nujoma, who, despite that abhorrent act, continues to speak the language of reconciliation and peace. It is the duty of this Organization, through its appropriate bodies, to ensure that the process now under way to bring independence to Namibia is successfully completed.

My country is also concerned by the persistence of apartheid as a system of government. Apartheid, that crime against humanity, continues to manifest itself in increased repression, police brutality, imprisonment, prolonged detention of the leaders of the black majority, bantustanization, banishments, restrictions, the banning of mass organizations and so forth.

The people and Government of Benin support the struggle of the valiant people of South Africa united in nationalist movements such as the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and all the other political parties and mass organizations which are resisting apartheid.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

The People's Republic of Benin reaffirms, through me, its resolute and categorical condemnation of the so-called elections of 6 September 1989, which were only a parody of democracy, because they excluded the vast majority of the South African people. My country welcomes the wise decision of our Organization to hold from 12 to 14 December 1989 a special session of the General Assembly devoted to apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa. We hope that this will be an important step forward towards stamping out that repellent system.

I could not speak about the problems of the southern part of our continent without mentioning the peace efforts which are emerging in Angola and Mozambique. The Brazzaville Protocol, the New York agreements, the summit meetings at Gbadolite and Harare and the various meetings between delegations of the parties concerned are favourable signs of peace and security in Angola and Mozambique. The establishment of peace in those two fraternal countries will enable their respective peoples to tackle the tasks of reconstruction and development. Therefore, the People's Republic of Benin encourages them to persevere on the path of reconciliation and national unity.

Similarly, we welcome and wish to encourage the negotiations currently under way aimed at restoring a climate of peace in the Sudan and Ethiopia.

My country also welcomes the signing of the agreement between Chad and Libya of 31 August 1989, which offers fresh hopes for a peaceful political settlement of the conflict between those two countries. In this respect, Benin warmly welcomes the spirit of concession, understanding and tolerance displayed by the Chadian and Libyan leaders as well as the firm determination of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) through its Ad Hoc Committee, and certain African Heads of State in seeking ways and means of arriving at a permanent solution to that dispute.

(Mr. Tavema, Benin)

With regard to Western Sahara, Benin firmly hopes that resolution 104 (XIX) of the Organization of African Unity and General Assembly resolution 43/33 will be fully and effectively implemented.

The People's Republic of Benin appreciates the sustained efforts undertaken by the POLISARIO Front and the Kingdom of Morocco to achieve a negotiated peace. We welcome the proposals and actions of the current Chairman of the OAU and the United Nations Secretary-General to organize a referendum on self-determination. The dialogue which has been started between these two parties must be continued in order to avoid any further escalation of the war, with the attendant disastrous consequences.

With respect to the dispute between Senegal and Mauritania, Benin supports the mediation efforts of the OAU and fervently hopes that tolerance and mutual understanding by both parties will prevail and that a just and lasting solution may be found that takes into account the genuine interests of those two fraternal peoples, united by so many long-standing, indissoluble links.

In the Middle East, progress towards peace has been slow. My country is convinced there can be no genuine peace in that part of the world without a solution to the Palestinian problem. The People's Republic of Benin welcomes and wishes to encourage the efforts of the international community to convene an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The situation prevailing in Lebanon remains a matter of grave concern. My country supports all efforts aimed at restoring unity to the people of Lebanon and guaranteeing its full sovereignty and the territorial integrity of its country by means of negotiation.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

The cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq must be confirmed by the opening of negotiations to bring about lasting peace, under the auspices of the Security Council and by recognition of the important role of the United Nations Military Observer Group in maintaining the cease-fire.

Conflicts and tension still persist in South-East Asia despite the progress made at the first and second informal meetings in Jakarta in July 1988 and February 1989. While the international Conference on Peace in Cambodia, held in Paris from 30 July to 30 August 1989, made possible important steps towards the restoration of peace, it did not, unfortunately, arrive at a comprehensive solution to the Cambodian problem, despite the praiseworthy diplomatic efforts of the French and Indonesian Governments. My country expresses the hope that weapons will yield to the rule of law and that the conflict will be settled on the basis of scrupulous respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries of South-East Asia and the effective withdrawal of all foreign troops.

With regard to the situation in Afghanistan, Benin notes that, despite the implementation of resolution 43/20, which was adopted by consensus at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, the Afghan people continues to live in an atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty. The effective restoration of peace requires scrupulous compliance with the agreement concluded between all the parties.

Still in Asia, the question of the reunification of Korea remains a burning issue. The People's Republic of Benin supports the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which reaffirmed at its last summit conference, in Belgrade, that such reunification would be promoted by fostering mutual confidence and

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

reconciliation of the north and the south and by the phased and balanced reduction of armed forces on the Korean peninsula.

My country can only welcome the important developments in Latin America and the Caribbean, which have taken various forms: democratization, emancipation, consolidation of national independence, concerted political action and economic integration. Benin supports the peace agreements signed by the Heads of State of Central America, particularly the one just signed in Tela, Honduras, which is aimed at establishing lasting peace in the region.

The climate of détente which currently prevails in international political relations is not, unfortunately, echoed in the economic field. There can be no peace and no security in the world without the prospects of economic prosperity for all countries and all peoples.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

The prolonged economic crisis emerged against a background of worsening inequalities, poverty, disease and hunger, with all the various frustrations that these bring in their wake. The drop in commodity prices, the heavy burden of external debt, profound structural handicaps, the drastic reduction in growth rates in the least developed countries, such as mine, and the fall in export earnings are tremendously difficult challenges for us to take up without massive and effective support from the international community.

The mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development demonstrated that the success of that Programme depends to a large extent on the political resolve of the leaders of the industrialized countries, as African States have already made tremendous sacrifices in implementing reform policies. Indeed, it is necessary for the developed countries to honour their undertakings to provide African States with sufficient assistance, particularly financial assistance, to ensure the success of structural adjustment programmes that have been agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The usefulness of such programmes, which have the merit of rationalizing production structures and expenditure machinery, has been proven, even though sometimes they generate social tensions because they are too inclined to give pride of place to major macro-economic balances. It is important that these situations be understood by the whole international community, which we urge to provide active support for the measures undertaken by the developing countries in order to attenuate these disturbing social consequences of economic recovery programmes.

(Mr. Tawema, Benin)

As representatives are aware, Benin has agreed with the IMF and the World Bank upon a structural adjustment programme with the IMF and the World Bank. May I, once again, offer my country's thanks to the States and international organizations that have contributed to the drawing up of our programme. Allow me also to express my Government's gratitude to all the developed countries that have announced the writing off of certain debts, to the benefit of the developing countries, and in particular of the least developed countries, including my own. This is undoubtedly one way of giving relief to the poorest countries. But the international community needs to draw up a new global strategy aimed at recovery in the developing countries' economies. It is desirable that the General Assembly, at this session, set the right tone so that the special session scheduled for April 1990 may take the appropriate decisions.

The concerns of the international community, in the face of environmental problems, have become more acute, given the threat of the dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes by the developed countries in the developing countries. It is thus urgent that we work together to establish measures that will prevent disruption in the world's ecological balance and will enable us to develop our capacity to maintain life.

It is important to take appropriate measures to halt the process of water pollution and air pollution, the progressive depletion of the ozone layer, soil degradation, deforestation and desertification, and the intolerable process by which many rare animal species are becoming extinct. We value highly the measures taken under the United Nations Environment Programme, aimed at discouraging activities likely to threaten the quality of the marine environment and the ecological balance of the seas.

My country welcomes also the proposal to convene, before the end of 1992, the second world conference on environment and development. Similarly, Benin is

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ready to support any measures aimed at drafting an international convention on the protection and conservation of the world's climate.

The year 1988 was the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - an anniversary that was marked both in New York, at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, and among the Member States. This was an opportunity for the international community to gauge the significant successes achieved by the United Nations in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and to assess what remains to be done in order to ensure the total liberation of mankind. The events that marked this commemoration in Benin took place throughout 1988 and are continuing in 1989. The international seminar on human rights and economic and social progress, and the national seminar in the People's Republic of Benin on the promotion and protection of human rights - held respectively from 30 May to 3 June and from 21 November to 25 November 1988 - the conferences and round tables on human rights organized in December 1988, and the translation into eight national languages of the text of the Universal Declaration have all been significant events in this programme.

Furthermore, many measures have been taken by the Government of Benin in the area of the promotion and protection of human rights. I should like to mention in particular the promulgation of the law setting up the Beninese Commission on Human Rights, and the legal decision to grant a general amnesty.

But all our efforts will be in vain if we lose sight of the future of the world. As may be imagined, I wish to speak of children and their situation - those of whom the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has said:

"Children do not live and grow up in a different world; they live in our world, and their survival and growth depend on the health of our societies. The situation of children in the world is bound up with growth and

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development, just as their well-being is vital for economic and social progress."

Having grasped at an early stage the fundamental importance of protecting children, Benin is taking part in the Bamako initiative, and, with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is carrying out the health project of Pahou, a few kilometres from Cotonou.

Furthermore, my country is committed to winning the battle to have all Beninese children vaccinated. Our aim is to have between 75 per cent and 80 per cent of all children covered by the end of the year 1990. In conjunction with the effective activities of UNICEF, many States have supported the idea of holding a world summit on children in 1990. In support of this great idea, and in order to translate it into practical terms, the General Assembly should at its forty-fourth session adopt unreservedly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, submitted for its consideration by the Executive Director of UNICEF.

As the principal political organization that is truly universal in character, the United Nations should continue to play a salutary role in the area of promoting world peace by means of general and complete disarmament, the suppression of all hotbeds of tension, the establishment of a fairer and more equitable international economic order, the protection of the environment, the campaign against hunger in the world, the elimination of all forms of social inequality, including racial discrimination and apartheid, and the promotion and protection of human rights and the rights of peoples and children.

Benin supports this Organization fully, in the hope that it will help all the peoples of the world to realize their legitimate aspiration to freedom, justice, peace and social progress.

Mr. BEMANANJARA (Madaqascar) (interpretation from French): At the behest of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Madaqascar I wish to convey to Major-General Garba our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. We have long known his merits and qualities and we trust that in the coming months he will continue to place at the service of the international community the devotion he has demonstrated in the defence of African dignity.

His predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, guided the work of the forty-third session in an outstanding manner. We appreciated his statesmanlike qualities and his courteous efficiency, and we thank him.

Reading the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization reinforced our view that no area of international activity is beyond his ken or sphere of legitimate interest. We were particularly struck by the coherence and lucidity of his description of activities aimed at keeping the peace, preventing conflicts, reducing the threat of war and promoting the settlement of disputes. We assure the Secretary-General of the continued co-operation of the Government of Madaqascar in that sphere as in others, and convey to him our best wishes for the successful discharge of his mandate.

During this debate the international situation has been analysed thoroughly and in detail, but often in a subjective manner, with events being interpreted from the standpoint of relations between North and South or East and West; it is true that we have not yet been able to rid ourselves of our preconceptions. Granted, there is less recrimination, more openness and a larger number of appeals to common sense and to the need to allay tensions. But at the same time everyone stands ready to defend new positions at a time when the predictable reactions of the cold-war era are no longer a decisive element in the formulation of national policy.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

We still seek a world free from day-to-day insecurity, a more democratic world, a world where national selfishness has given way to the common interest, a world unequivocally devoted to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Cynics would say we have been trying to do this without too many results for the past 44 years and that we are condemned to instability, because balance - even the balance we are welcoming today - is always precarious.

But let us begin to build with what we have and with what we are promised. To be sure, nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament are far away, on a distant horizon. But it would be crass to disregard the fact that realignment of the mutual interests of the great Powers and the two principal military blocs and a certain flexibility in stated pre-conditions have permitted the dialogue on arms control to resume.

By the summer of 1990 there will be a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, to be followed probably by an agreement on naval nuclear weapons. There has been progress on conventional weapons. Chemical weapons have been the subject of more or less similar proposals by the two super-Powers. Compromise has been reached on verification of underground nuclear tests. The 1972 Treaty on anti-ballistic missiles is being respected. Finally, to give longer-term perspective to current initiatives, we expect the convening in 1990 of a United Nations conference on the conversion of military industries to civilian use.

The list is not as complete as we might have wished; it omits at least two points. Could it be some remaining yearning for rivalry and confrontation between the great Powers that has suppressed mention of zones of peace and co-operation, including that of the Indian Ocean, and of nuclear-weapon-free zones? What role is to be assigned to the United Nations in the multilateral verification of

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

disarmament agreements? It is good to show that we have been moving in the right direction for several years, but it would be even better to take measures to consolidate the international community's confidence in the United Nations in all spheres of international relations.

When we mention the United Nations we naturally think of the Secretary-General, of the principal organs, and thus the decision-making procedures. But the most important decisions - relating to aggression, the maintenance and restoration of international peace and security, the settlement of disputes, the International Trusteeship System, and arms control and eventual disarmament - are by statute taken by the Security Council.

We want to strengthen the Council's role in the areas of timeliness, effectiveness, credibility and democracy. It is therefore time to review Article 27 of the Charter, in particular its paragraph 3. The veto power, as it is commonly known, has often paralysed the Security Council more than one might have reasonably expected. At a time when the rule of consensus is largely accepted, we should consider either eliminating the clause requiring unanimity among the permanent members or extending it to all members. Coexistence of consensus and the veto is intolerable unless certain members view consensus as the ability to cast a double veto.

After that digression - which was not really a digression at all - we wonder, despite our commitment to détente and co-operation, whether the present improvement in the political climate applies everywhere and whether it can survive the test of time and events. We have been disappointed too often in the past, and our experience with volte-faces, unhealthy obstinacy and bad faith on the part of some of our interlocutors hardly justifies excessive, soothing optimism.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

In southern Africa there is talk of a new constitutional order, fundamental change, dialogue and power-sharing by the year 2000. The gradualists ask us to view this supposed turnaround as assuring the coming of democracy to South Africa. But we see only slogans intended to buy time, offset the negative impact of sanctions and maintain segregation and white supremacy in a country that has been distorted by the persistence of the monstrosities known as bantustans.

We see the problem in two parts: full recognition of black nationalism as the factor that will determine the political, economic and social future of South Africa; and, as a corollary, equal and full enjoyment of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights by the black majority.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

Until there is agreement on those two points, and they are translated into reality, everything will remain at the level of good intentions. It is very easy to deny those good intentions by making exceptions of special and emergency situations, and then we can do nothing to put an end to the cycle of cynicism, bitterness, impatience and violence - violence carried out for the sake of freedom, and therefore justified.

In the same region, the plan resulting from Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is being applied as best it can in Namibia. The operation is difficult and complex. The casual arrogance of the South African representatives can upset the African nations and put South Africa's impartiality in doubt. We still have the impression that the elections will be just one more opportunity to use manoeuvres and manipulations to frustrate the true aspirations of the Namibian people. Next month will be decisive. I would simply repeat Comrade Sam Nujoma's reference to

"freedom and independence for Namibia in order to permit the advent of peace and, if that is the wish of the minority, national reconciliation".

Our position on Western Sahara has not fundamentally changed. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the situation has evolved, despite some differences of view. The most important thing at this point is to find a political solution, beginning with direct dialogue between the two parties, within the framework of the agreement in principle of 30 August 1988 between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic.

In the Near and the Middle East, in southern and South-East Asia and in Latin America we see particularly disturbing developments. Hardly is a step taken towards a comprehensive and acceptable solution than difficulties appear. They are difficulties inherent in the nature of conflicts and disputes, but they

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

have been put aside for the sake of convenience or because of an excess of optimism. The international community can see here a veritable Penelope's shroud. We are almost powerless as we witness the continuation or the beginning of civil wars, with their train of devastation and refugees and the introduction of distrust, which has become a permanent feature of international relations.

How much longer must we wait for the installation of Governments of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and Cambodia? How do we stand with regard to the independent reunification, without outside interference, of the Korean peninsula? When will a just and lasting peace be established between Iran and Iraq? Why prolong the suffering of Lebanon and tolerate the total stagnation on the question of the Middle East? How can we allow the Palestinians, whose national rights are internationally recognized, to continue to be the pawn in shameful dealings and haggling that create so much suffering? What is the reason for the lack of progress in the intercommunal talks in Cyprus? Finally, why must the countries of Central America be constantly frustrated in their search for peace, co-operation and reconciliation through dialogue?

The settlement of regional conflicts is on the agenda of the regular exchanges of view between the two super-Powers. It should be an integral part of the historic renewal in international relations, but so far it has been regarded as a matter of secondary importance. From time to time some results of diplomacy are brought out into the open, but discreet or secret diplomacy requires that the rest be dealt with behind the scenes. But the situations, the claims and the stakes are well known; we all advocate the same principles and we have together defined the framework for a settlement, here at the United Nations. Therefore, we are all involved in a common undertaking, which cannot be the monopoly of any one party.

(Mr. Beamanjara, Madagascar)

It is true that on several occasions we have asked the major Powers to use their influence, but that cannot be regarded as a transfer of competence to them alone. We are asking for a little more transparency so that, following the principle of shared security, we may exercise our responsibilities in full knowledge of the situation.

My comments apply equally to the economic area. Until there is equal and guaranteed security for all we cannot speak about viable, durable, acceptable or sustainable development. The use from one decade to another of various adjectives shows that we are still seeking a development model which takes account of the interests of the whole community. The reports of international institutions would lead one to believe that, at least in its global aspects, the crisis is drawing to an end. Statistics may support the advocates of theoretical interdependence, but the reality is different.

The nature of the complaints of the developing countries has not changed. We continue to suffer from a system that has lasted too long, from structures that are inadequate, if not anachronistic, and from one-sided rules of the game. That is true of the fixing of prices for our products, the need to go through certain channels, the organization of international trade, the monetary and financial system and access to technology.

We are again speaking of the new international economic order, which means the initiation of global negotiations in the framework of the North-South dialogue to remedy the situation I have described, which has become increasingly intolerable. But the answer is always the same. On the one hand, there is recognition of the need for an interdependent world, the internationalization of problem-solving and the overlapping nature of the solutions to problems. On the other hand, because of the principle of decentralization of decision-making, there is insistence that

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

specific points must be discussed within separate institutions and agencies. We hope that the impasse thus created will be ended by the convening in April 1990 of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and in particular the revival of economic growth and the development of the developing countries.

In the mean time, as the North-South dialogue will not, as far as we can see, resume soon, we must organize ourselves better in order to take effective control of the authentic path for our own development, and we must revitalize South-South co-operation. We have sometimes thought it sufficient to criticize ourselves, as if our failure resulted more from our hesitation to take decisive collective action in key areas, such as raw materials, monetary questions and the financing of development.

Ten years ago, at the sixth summit conference of the non-aligned countries, Madagascar suggested the creation of a stabilization fund, a monetary fund and a development fund for the non-aligned countries and other developing countries. The international environment has changed since then, but our objectives are still the same: to achieve co-ordination on problems of international liquidity; to rebalance international trade, introducing equity and justice; to increase export earnings; and to recycle available resources for development purposes.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

The establishment of those three funds would be a good thing, but it would be difficult. Yet we believe more than ever before that an integrated approach to development at the level of analysis and at the level of actual operations and functioning remains essential if we wish to rebuild the world economy on a firm basis of solidarity and mutual trust.

These few ideas I have expressed on development and on the reluctance, if not the passivity, of both North and South may appear irrelevant if looked at from the standpoint of the real and immediate problems of international debt.

Let us set aside for the moment the well-known controversy over responsibility for the indebtedness, the negative effects of deflation, the postponing or reduction of the debt, the suitability of cultural adjustment programmes, the timeliness of structural adjustment programmes in the African framework, and the impact of current initiatives on political and socio-economic changes. Above and beyond different approaches to understanding and methodology, the objective is always the same, namely, how to manage the debt reasonably while maintaining sustainable development with a human face under the best possible conditions of complementarity and co-ordination.

Different approaches are suggested to the debtors. Some have proved successful in specific cases and others benefit from rational analysis at the level of programming and action. New solutions may be desirable, but they must come not from polarization of positions but from agreements between debtors and creditors. The search for such agreement may be made easier within certain forums, including the International Conference on Money and Finance for Development, a conference of debtors, the International Conference on debt and the International Conference on Africa's External Indebtedness.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

If we recognize that we face a long-term problem which, if not solved, may threaten economic development, the international banking system and even international peace and security, we cannot escape the conclusion that we need to tackle the problem on a multilateral, systematic basis.

There is no panacea, but there is nothing to prevent our considering certain proposals, including those of Professor Robert A. Mundell, without committing ourselves to them. For example, would it be a viable proposition to combine the potential of the Bank for International Settlements with an informal agency on the model of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), to be called "general agreement on debt, adjustment and development policies"?

History shows that the problem of international debt has existed for over 2,000 years. For the developing countries, this problem is a reality to which they awoke with some distress 10 years ago, because they had not expected to experience again the catastrophe of the 1920s and 1930s. Indebtedness is permanent in nature. Once a debt accrues the level of development of a country is always assessed in terms of its ability to increase its debt. That is the system; it is for debtors and creditors to ensure that it functions in an orderly manner taking into account foreseeable developments in the political, economic and social situation.

Something else that could change our attitude to development is the importance attached in the last decade to the environment and the ecosystem as a whole. The public are increasingly aware of the dangers of wastage and exhaustion of resources, pollution and harmful industrial wastes, toxic waste and dumping of such waste, biospheric disruptions, desertification, deforestation, soil erosion and degradation and the threat of the extinction of certain vegetable or animal species.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

For a long time human society, encouraged by the spectacular results of the Industrial Revolution, having accepted the myth of the conquest of new frontiers, believed that production and growth were unlimited. In fact, however, having studied our common heritage, we know its limits. The true danger now is to pursue at all costs a policy of productivity and unbridled competition. It would be irresponsible not to recognize that, in spite of all our efforts, closely interrelated crises persist: crises of development, the environment, energy, debt, population and drugs, that other scourge with disturbing political, social and economic consequences.

It was in this context that the member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at their special summit meeting devoted to economic questions and debt, in November 1988, welcomed the conclusions of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which was presided over by Gro Harlem Brundtland. They mentioned in particular the conclusion concerning "sustainable development", which was defined as

"development that responds to the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

This entire new global strategy is acceptable, but since it deals with various areas we must jointly consider the definition of priorities, rights and responsibilities, the inclusion of that concept in the present system of security and how it fits into the North-South dialogue, the unavoidable changes in methods of production and consumption, national and international commitment, the establishment of a new co-ordination institution and the future of the United Nations Environment Programme.

(Mr. Ramananjara, Madagascar)

Before 1992, for which an international conference on environment and development has been proposed, specific proposals could be put forward and discussed with a view to establishing international co-operation and action in the ecological sphere.

As I develop my ideas in this statement I realize that the challenge of development is a difficult one but that it is our duty to accept it and succeed. Each nation or group of nations must strive to find the best means of doing so, conscious of the limitations imposed by the surrounding crisis. We have turned to our traditional partners. We have followed the suggestions of financial and monetary institutions. Now we need new concepts that can help us to emerge as quickly as possible from the present uncertain situation.

On the political level, the United Nations has made a spectacular recovery, helped by its ability to define an appropriate framework for settlement and by renewed confidence in multilateralism. On the conceptual level, there is no reason why the United Nations should not be able to achieve in development what it has achieved in peace-keeping.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

We agree that there should be an overall reorganization of the United Nations, not only to maintain international peace and security or facilitate the adjustment or settlement of disputes, but also, to use the words of the Charter,

"To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character".

No gratuitous challenge is being made to the existing system, although there is no unanimity on this point. From time to time, however, we need to take a new look at the Charter, particularly Chapters IX and X in the light of our experiences, existing situations and the expected results. It would not be wise to juggle with the the role of the Economic and Social Council, with regard to co-operation for development. If one accepts the idea of the collective responsibility of Members and the ability of the United Nations to guarantee world security, one cannot disregard the economic dimension of international security.

We must pursue our argument to its logical conclusion and say that comprehensive security must be taken into account in all spheres of international activity, even though we may be accused of bringing back exclusivism and opportunism in the service of causes which are not necessarily supported by all.

Mr. SOMARE (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I congratulate Mr. Garba of Nigeria on his unanimous election to the important post of President of the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under his able leadership the challenging work before the Assembly will be carried to its conclusion with efficiency and success.

I should also like to register Papua New Guinea's sincere appreciation of the excellent job accomplished by his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

In addition, let me add my Government's voice to the voices of those who have already spoken in praise of the commendable work being done by the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and his staff in implementing United Nations programmes.

Papua New Guinea continues to regard the United Nations as having a unique role in working for the relaxation of tensions, the resolution of conflicts and the building of a strong framework for international co-operation based on mutual respect and understanding. Papua New Guinea remains committed to playing its part in contributing to achieving this objective.

My delegation attends this session with the hope that we shall collectively take advantage of the opportunities before us to hasten the realization of the global environment that the founders of the United Nations envisaged for us and future generations.

We have before us this year another complex agenda which, among other things, points to an international community saddled with a great number of problems. Some of these problems date back to before the United Nations was even established. Yet it is the responsibility of the Assembly to work for the resolution of those problems. The uncertainty that they cause is felt by all of us, and for many developing countries, including Papua New Guinea, has a direct impact on our development efforts. But there is still some hope and optimism. Papua New Guinea believes with a good measure of confidence that positive steps have been taken in dealing with the problems which are the subject of this session's attention.

My delegation highly commends the Secretary-General,

Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless efforts in upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We note with considerable satisfaction his comprehensive report, which records progress being made in resolving regional tensions and conflicts, among them those in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Namibia,

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

apartheid South Africa, Western Sahara and Central America, and the Iran-Iraq conflict. The report also underscores the efforts being made to tackle other pressing issues, including the environment, disarmament, trade, finance, debt servicing and human rights.

Our own region, the South Pacific, is relatively free of major conflicts, but is nevertheless an area which is being given increasing attention by other countries and international organizations. The South Pacific is not immune from the effects of international tensions elsewhere and the worrying trends in the world economy.

The community of the South Pacific comprises mainly small island States scattered in the vast Pacific Ocean. Our struggle is one of survival, a struggle to develop our people and national economies with the limited financial and technical resources available to us while at the same time keeping our region free of big-Power rivalry and the environment free of nuclear and other activities which could harm, if not destroy, our region's resources, including the most important source of livelihood for most island communities - fish and marine resources.

Since our independence in 1975 we have actively pursued the cause of decolonization in the South Pacific. Most of our region has been decolonized, but there are some island communities whose future is still uncertain.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the progress being made by the Government of France in bringing political and administrative reforms to New Caledonia through the Matignon and other agreements signed between the French Government and the different political groups in the Territory. But we believe that the pace of change must be hastened and a clear commitment made for bringing the Territory to independence as soon as possible.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea regrets the tragic loss of Mr. Jean-Marie Tjibaou, President of the FLNKS, and his deputy, Mr. Yeiwene Yeiwene, on 4 May 1989. The deaths of the late President Tjibaou, Mr. Yeiwene Yeiwene and others who have championed the cause of independence in the Territory for so long and over the years made extensive representations within and outside the United Nations on behalf of their Territory, and who were among those who signed the Matignon agreements, show that more needs to be done by the Government of France to bring about changes which conform with the aspirations of the people of New Caledonia, especially the indigenous Kanaks.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

Both these leaders were men of great vision, strength and wisdom. They made great sacrifices for the indigenous Melanesian people of New Caledonia. We pay tribute to them, and we know that their just struggle will not end.

New Caledonia is on the United Nations list of Non-Self Governing Territories, following a decision of the Assembly in December 1986. The Assembly therefore has a continuing responsibility to monitor developments in the Territory closely. The Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, this year

"Strongly urged that the question of New Caledonia be kept under active consideration at the United Nations until the conditions for an internationally acceptable act of self-determination, in accordance with the principles and practices of the United Nations, have been met".

We also hope that the Administering Authority, in France, will comply fully with all its obligations as provided for in the United Nations Charter, and with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

Papua New Guinea has also welcomed recent progress made under the Compact arrangements between the United States and the Micronesian islands. We have moved forward in establishing diplomatic relations with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands. But we also look forward to the resolution of the outstanding issues affecting Palau's political future.

In the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea is equally concerned about protection of the environment. On 10 August this year, Papua New Guinea ratified two important treaties which seek to protect our environment - namely, the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty and the Convention for the Protection of the Environment and Resources of the South Pacific. Taken as a package together

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with fisheries and other economic arrangements that are being progressively put in place, they represent important corner-stones for the protection of the environment in the South Pacific region, and for the management and development of its vast marine resources in accordance with the interests of the island communities. My Government intends to work closely with our partners in the South Pacific to fully implement these treaty arrangements, and, like those partners, we shall strongly - and especially oppose, France's continued nuclear-testing programme at Mururoa Atoll and all the other activities that are harmful to the resources and livelihood of our people.

Such regional initiatives deserve the full and active support of the United Nations. They form part of the wider international concern about, and the action now being taken to protect, the global environment.

The Government of Papua New Guinea applauds the decision of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to ratify two of the three Protocols to the South Pacific nuclear-free-zone Treaty. We strongly urge other nuclear-weapons States, including France, the United Kingdom and the United States, to ratify the Protocols and respect the operations of this Treaty and other environmental arrangements in the South Pacific.

In regional fisheries, a successful regional fisheries agreement between the United States and the countries members of the South Pacific Forum, signed in 1987, is already contributing to the development of our fisheries resources. We are prepared to enter into similar arrangements with other major fishing nations, on the basis of fair and equitable returns for island States and principles designed to protect and carefully manage the fisheries resources and our environment.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

We urge the Government of Japan to co-operate in unlocking the stalled negotiations on a regional fisheries arrangement with island States.

Consistent with the declaration made in July this year by the leaders of the South Pacific Forum, we also call on Japan and other distant-water-fishing nations to cease completely the harmful method of gill-net fishing, often referred to as the "wall of death" in the South Pacific. We are convinced that such a destructive and indiscriminate fishing practice will, if not halted, increasingly diminish our peoples' opportunities and chances not only of a livelihood but of survival in the future.

Fisheries, trade development, transport and communications are among the major economic activities being pursued by island States and regional organizations established within the region, in our efforts to improve the welfare of our people and strengthen our wider connections with the international community. Papua New Guinea strongly supports the work of regional organizations in the South Pacific as well as other international agencies, including United Nations agencies, which collaborate closely with them in bringing development to our region.

Papua New Guinea's interest extends beyond the South Pacific region. Our foreign policy seeks to expand and diversify relationships with countries Members of the United Nations. Significant progress is already being made towards this commitment in the Asian region.

We highly value our growing links with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN is an impressive regional organization, which continues to promote understanding and co-operation in the South-East Asian region and elsewhere, through, among other things, the taking of constructive regional initiatives on issues such as Cambodia. Papua New Guinea has special observer

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status at annual meetings of ASEAN foreign ministers. We are pleased that our relationship with ASEAN has been further strengthened this year through Papua New Guinea's accession on 7 July 1989 to the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in South-East Asia.

As I said earlier, the agenda for this session is a complex one. A significant number of items quite rightly deal with initiatives to reduce international tensions and to promote the cause of peace and security. Papua New Guinea strongly supports international efforts to reduce tensions and the number of conflicts.

We especially commend the leaderships in Moscow and in Washington. They have in recent years worked with a deep sense of commitment towards reducing international tensions, and we welcome their further commitment at this session to eliminate chemical weapons. We commend their efforts on disarmament. But we urge them to go even further.

Their efforts in particular contributed to the climate of optimism that became evident at last year's session of the General Assembly, and have contributed to the maintenance of that climate this year. Their efforts and those of others, particularly members of the Security Council, must be supported if there is to be any further meaningful progress in the solution of problems in Cambodia, Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Korean peninsula, Namibia and southern Africa.

Papua New Guinea welcomes signals of Vietnamese troop withdrawals from Cambodia and hopes that the commitment this entails will be fulfilled, including free elections supervised by the United Nations, and that the people of Cambodia will reassert their identity and return to democracy, peace and tranquillity, and socio-economic progress.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The situation in the Korean peninsula is also of concern to my Government. At independence, Papua New Guinea established formal diplomatic ties with both the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Korea. Our links with the Republic of Korea have developed more rapidly. But our commitment is to support initiatives by both Koreas for the peaceful reunification of their people. Papua New Guinea urges the Governments of both Koreas to maintain active dialogue in working for understanding, reconciliation and efforts to achieve the peaceful unification of the Korean people. We note with great interest the proposals contained in the address of President Roh Tae Woo on 11 September 1989 concerning national unification. The declaration, we believe, sets a constructive basis for discussions which could lead to early reunification. I reiterate again that the Government of Papua New Guinea supports the admission of both North and South Korea as full Members of the United Nations. Their admission, we believe, has the potential to open up additional avenues towards dialogue, co-operation and understanding.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea continues to believe that efforts made to address the underlying causes of tension and conflict in the Middle East must continue. My Government commends the parties - including the United Nations - involved in this important process. Papua New Guinea reaffirms its belief that the Palestinians have a right to a homeland just as much as Israel has a right to exist within secured borders. Those two conditions are fundamental to any lasting resolution of the tensions and conflicts in the Middle East.

The problem of apartheid and the related colonial situation imposed by the racist régime of South Africa still exist in spite of numerous efforts by this body and other United Nations agencies. Papua New Guinea is of the firm belief that the option of mandatory sanctions against South Africa holds good prospects for success both in dismantling apartheid and in achieving the independence of Namibia.

With regard to global trade and the economic developments that have taken place in the recent past, we note that the industrialized countries have moved towards structural-adjustment policies to address the issues of low growth and high inflation through the liberalization of trade, the elimination of industrial and agricultural subsidies and the creation of employment opportunities. We also note that many developing countries have experienced not only slow and stagnant economic growth but debt problems as well. As a result of these continuing economic difficulties many developing countries, including Papua New Guinea, have undertaken stringent economic policies and programmes to maintain sustainable economic growth.

While there has been progress in some of those areas, Papua New Guinea, with a developing and agriculturally based economy, is concerned that the effects of protectionist pressure exercised by industrialized economies on some of our

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strategic agricultural export commodities have adversely influenced our national plans and efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth. It is therefore imperative that the efforts of the global community, through the United Nations and its agencies as well as the current Uruguay Round of negotiations, should be strengthened to address such trade practices and distortions in order to ensure balanced, liberalized and fair trade between the countries in the international market.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the most important and pressing issue in the world today is the question of peace and development. Peace is the pre-condition for economic development through the expansion of international co-operation. Only in an international environment of peace and stability can the economic development of all nations be enhanced. Papua New Guinea therefore attaches great importance to international efforts aimed at achieving peace, harmony and development in the world. We also fully support efforts aimed at dealing with the growing problems of trade protectionism, debt servicing and the slowing down of financial transfers to developing countries.

Papua New Guinea has taken note of the overwhelming support delegations have given to the need for and effectiveness of the United Nations system. While there can be some criticisms about the Organization's ability to deal with problems affecting the international community, my delegation believes that there are positive signs that the United Nations network of agencies has been given a chance to work. A considerable amount of momentum has developed within the United Nations in tackling and seeking solutions to some of the world's problems. We must all take full advantage of these opportunities.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.