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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam)
(Vice-President)
later: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Jackson (Guyana)
Mr. Van Lierop (Vanuatu)

- Organization of work
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Carter (Bahamas)
Mr. da Graca (Sao Tome and Principe)
Mr. Basdeo (Trinidad and Tobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. JACKSON (Guyana): We are meeting at a time when the dynamic of co-operation has gained ascendancy over that of confrontation. As a result, a good mood prevails in the international environment. It has engendered perceptible improvement in international relations and anticipates the ushering in of an order of global peace and equitable development in which the United Nations would have a central role. That is why this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, convened as it is at such a hopeful juncture, is expected to promote the expansion of global co-operation in what should be a global endeavour to build a new and better world.

Guyana is confident that under your able guidance, Mr. President, that expectation will be met. I therefore wish to extend to you my warmest congratulations and my best wishes for a successful presidency. In your personage as a distinguished son of Nigeria and of Africa reside all the qualities and virtues essential to such a high office.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute also to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the inspiring leadership that he so ably provided.

As we review the evolution of international relations as we approach the end of the 1980s, it should be acknowledged that there have been positive developments in the search for an international order that yields equitable benefits to all members of the global society.

International tension has eased markedly; dialogue and negotiation have given impetus to conflict resolution and bloc rivalries have noticeably diminished. Regional co-operation has become a global process, and changes of a far-reaching nature are being made within societies and in relations between them. The retreat

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of colonialism is accelerating, and in the expression of renewed faith in multilateralism there is increasing recourse to the United Nations as a universal organization capable of being used effectively by its members in fulfilment of peoples' aspirations, which transcend national boundaries. In the economic field, too, changes of a far-reaching and beneficial nature are taking place, though these are not yet as pervasive. These major trends and tendencies give us hope for the future.

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It is the case, however, that old problems to which solutions have not so far been found persist and new issues have arisen posing new challenges. Solutions to these problems can be achieved only through openness and transparency requiring genuine international co-operation, for the issues are of a global character. Here I refer to questions such as the environment and drugs.

In considering the myriad items on the international agenda, I suggest that we are helped by what is a more widespread appreciation of the current complexities and requirements which interdependence has generated. Today, interdependence is not merely a fashionable slogan; its consequence has made global action an urgent imperative. Nowhere is this reality more patent than in the struggle for disarmament, especially in respect of nuclear weapons. Happily, this process has at last begun. By signing the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have demonstrated a commendable willingness to reduce their nuclear arsenals; and they are engaged in ongoing discussions on limiting strategic offensive weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

It is good to note as well that the question of conventional arms, beyond the level of sufficiency for national defence, is being increasingly addressed. This development should be encouraged at both the national and the international levels. I include the national dimension because it is unfortunately the case that conventional weapons have become a regular commodity of international trade. Success can attend the international efforts in this area only if there is matching restraint in terms of both acquisition and production. Equally, our concern should be heightened by the dangers which rapid advances in the technology of weapons portend.

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More generally, since the threat of the arms race affects the lives of all peoples, disarmament cannot be pursued on the basis of exclusivity. As the Secretary-General observed:

"... the United Nations should continue to be at the forefront of multilateral efforts in this field". (A/44/1, p. 15)

The proper use of United Nations machinery in this regard is an indispensable requirement.

Détente between the super-Powers has had the beneficial effect of easing international tensions. This development has contributed to the emergence of an environment in which the indigenous efforts of regional States to resolve their problems have been assisted. For it is undeniable that in all regions where conflicts exist the intrusion of external interests has complicated the search for a solution. It is the happy circumstance therefore that we can today witness in such conflict areas as Afghanistan, Central America, Iraq and Iran, and southern Africa that the conjuncture of super-Power détente and regional and other efforts have led to dialogue and negotiation for the solution to those conflicts and to fresh hopes for the settlement of disputes which at one time seemed intractable. In all these situations the United Nations has played an important and significant role. The process of settlement is, however, as yet incomplete.

The delicately negotiated peace agreements as regards Afghanistan should be scrupulously implemented so as not to jeopardize a political solution. In Central America, where the Esquipulas agreements and more lately the Tela agreement have paved the way to peace, the regional States must be supported and their efforts brought to consummation. Iran and Iraq, which have agreed to a cease-fire, should both be urged towards reconciliation and the restoration of good relations. In Cyprus, it is regrettable that the intercommunal talks have not progressed as the

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international community would have wished. We urge all parties concerned to react favourably to the reasonable proposals advanced by the Secretary-General.

In Kampuchea, where war, destruction and suffering have prevailed for much too long, it is to be hoped that the States concerned will revive the Paris Conference in a determined attempt to find common ground. In Korea, where the North and South remain divided, the international community should provide greater stimulus towards their peaceful reunification, without outside interference.

In Western Sahara, where there are signs of progress in implementing the peace plan proposed by the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), we must urge the parties to co-operate fully in the endeavour to settle this protracted dispute.

Namibia, of course, has a unique relationship with the United Nations, which after all is the legal Administering Authority. Its freedom has for too long been denied by the intransigent Pretoria régime. Now, however, Namibia appears to be on the threshold of regaining that freedom. The special responsibility the Organization bears imposes on it the need for it to be even more vigilant as the process nears its conclusion. We should brook no subterfuge or machination by South Africa to frustrate the exercise by the Namibian people of all their political rights and ensure that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is implemented in all its provisions. Guyana is numbered among those countries that have contributed human resources to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) operations that are intended to secure that result. We therefore look forward to welcoming an independent Namibia to the Organization.

Unlike Namibia, the prospect for the end of apartheid - which is inevitable - is not as clearly discernible in time. Nevertheless the shattering of the myth of the régime's military invincibility, taken in conjunction with the pressure exerted by the liberation movements and by the international community, and the

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contradictions inherent in the system of apartheid, render its sustainability increasingly difficult. Changes in keeping with the people's democratic aspirations must come. It is a matter of time. Meanwhile, it is necessary to intensify international pressure for such change. Sanctions must be maintained, tightened and expanded and succour and encouragement given to the oppressed people of that troubled land. There should be no relenting until apartheid is totally dismantled.

The Palestinians are yet another people deprived of their fundamental rights. Scattered throughout the world in a painful diaspora they suffer the indignity of a people deprived of a homeland. The intifadah graphically portrays the consequences of the suppression of a people and at the same time their unshakable resolve to regain their freedom. The requirements for a solution have long been prescribed. What has been absent is the determination of all members of the international community, and one or other of the parties concerned, boldly to take the necessary steps. The international conference on the Middle East called for by the United Nations could, if pursued with patience and with seriousness, lead to a durable and lasting negotiated settlement.

The current mood is not unpropitious to collective efforts aimed at solving the problems to which I have made reference. Let us seize the opportunity. Even as we do so, however, it is necessary to pay due attention to new issues that are global in scope.

The first of these is the environment. Even though the question of the human environment was first addressed in a global context at the world conference in Stockholm in 1972 it is only in recent times that the international community has been acutely sensitized to the dangers which its persistent degradation holds for the future of mankind.

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It is apposite, I believe, to recall that in Stockholm the principles agreed for international co-operative action included respect for the sovereignty of States and the requirement that concern for the environment should enhance, not adversely affect, the prospects for growth of the economies of the developing countries. It was also agreed then that the international community should adopt appropriate measures to promote the legitimate interests of the developing countries in economic development. Present concern should respect those principles.

It is true that since 1972 further degradation of the environment has taken place, thus adding urgency to the need to adopt appropriate measures to halt and reverse this trend. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other international and national bodies have devised helpful programmes in this respect. Yet there is a danger that unless the issue is addressed in a structured manner and without a zeal born of irrationality the desired international co-operation could be made to succumb to prejudiced attitudes and unfair practices. In this regard, I speak as the representative of an Amazonian country, cognizant of the fact that some current positions on the utilization of the tropical rain forests, if maintained, could lead to unwanted delay in building a global consensus on the way forward.

Guyana is of the view that the present situation requires an approach which is based on true partnership and in which the sharing of burdens takes account of both differential capacities and past excesses. It has been stated, for example, that the tropical rain forests are a storehouse of bio-diversity which can be utilized for the benefit of all mankind. Yet it is a sad fact that those of us who own those forests and are being prevailed upon in one form or another to preserve them have rarely benefited from their exploitation as a gene bank, except as consumers of other peoples' products. In this regard it is imperative so to construct new arrangements as to enable the benefits of ownership to be at least equal to those

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of discovery. I accordingly call upon the United Nations and appropriate agencies to take action in order to make this a reality.

Happily, as regards the second issue - that of drugs - there is increasing recognition that it can be dealt with adequately only if all dimensions of the problem are addressed with vigour. I refer to production, trafficking and consumption. It is good to note that within recent times action has been strengthened nationally and internationally. Guyana supports the initiatives taken by our sister Caribbean nations Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to deal with some facets of this terrifying problem. On this issue we can only move forward together.

Turning to international economic relations, it cannot be said that the global economy is in good shape when assessed for its overall quality and against the backdrop of the well-being of mankind. It is true that world output continues to expand, and current evidence suggests that this trend will not be reversed. There are even claims that the world is on the threshold of a new era of prosperity. However, despite the many positive characteristics, the continuous amplification of the international economy has not always been vigorous. An uneven pattern of growth has been experienced and this has not helped to revitalize the battered economies of some developing countries, although strenuous national adjustment efforts to achieve the relief promised by the expansion have been made.

After nearly a decade of the search for a satisfactory solution, debt continues to preside over the economic fortunes of many a developing country. Instead of being net recipients of financial flows capable of energizing their economies, the disadvantaged nations have become involuntary sources of finance for developed countries. Trade is always an imperative for growth. Yet the opportunities in that area have frequently been thwarted by the continuing resort to protectionism. The chance to produce positive results is greatly handicapped by

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the harsh conditions pertaining to commodities of export value to developing countries.

The world is highly competitive and efficiency and quality remain paramount considerations. In such circumstances, increasing the possibilities for sustained growth demands that account be taken of the lagging technological capability of developing countries and the inadequacy of human resource development in the evolution of the world economy.

A significant feature of this decade is the extent to which the major industrialized countries have increased their policy co-ordination on economic matters. Such action has brought success in the control of inflation, yet concern persists at all levels about the impact of large imbalances among industrialized countries and instability of their exchange and interest rates on the future outlook for everyone.

It is against the background of such unsatisfactory conditions, in which hunger, malnutrition and preventable disease produce unacceptable numbers of casualties, that we assess the global economy. These economic and social problems must be overcome if developing countries are to cope with their current adversity and succeed in contributing to higher levels of sustained growth and development. Diminishing living standards and the widening gap between North and South run counter to other efforts to increase peace and security and protect the environment.

The return to prosperity will not come about easily. Yet, as we survey the economic panorama, we observe a steady improvement in economic relations among States that gives rise to a new sense of possibilities in international co-operation. Such progress involves changes of both an international and a domestic character. They are not only institutional but also issue-related. The progress is reflected in the intensification of integration processes in many regions of the world and the establishment of trade agreements.

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Over the last four years the countries of the Caribbean Community have sought vigorously to advance this process. During those years major decisions have been taken to develop the Community as a single economy. The latest measures are contained in the Grand Anse declaration, adopted by the Heads of Government of that Community when they met in July this year in Grenada. The Community, which is bound together by a perception of common destiny, has become more cohesive and its members more mutually supportive. The response of the States and people of the Community to the devastation wrought upon several island territories by hurricane Hugo is eloquent testimony to the sense of fraternity that exists.

Their limitations notwithstanding, the recent proposals on debt have contributed to a gradual evolution of the debt strategy and create the hope that the problem could eventually be resolved. In this respect there is a need to move forward faster on debt reduction and to extend its application as widely as necessary. At the same time, it is essential to ensure that the positive effects of debt reduction are not blunted by the unavailability of new money and, where relevant, by unfavourable movements in interest rates.

The changes in these economic relationships are also evident in the shifts in the perception of, and the approach taken by the major multilateral institutions to, the problems of developing countries. An important development is the involvement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial support for debt and debt-service reduction in line with more recent efforts to respond to this crisis. Additionally, with a growing number of low-income countries suffering economic setbacks, the IMF has adapted its policies regarding the use by these countries of its structural adjustment facility. Moreover, it has created the enhanced structural adjustment facility, the terms of which have been adjusted to allow many beneficiary countries to draw on its resources in, we hope, a timely fashion.

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Multilateral trade negotiations are in progress under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Gradual progress is being made, and until the discussions are completed, the possibility remains open that a fairer and better trading system will be created. But such a possibility will be diminished if sincere efforts are not made to fulfil commitments on standstill and roll-back provisions that are vital to the growth of third-world trade.

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At the same time, more countries are making efforts to participate fully in the international economy. The response to those developments is gaining momentum as forms of assistance are devised to nurture their integration. As this process evolves, developing countries should become full beneficiaries through the increased trade and investment that accompany their inclusion, in the awareness that they too are part of the international economic system.

Through all those measures, we can turn adversity into triumph for global development. It can be broadened by expanding the limits of co-operation to encompass suitable international policy action in all important areas of concern, including those of commodities and human resource development.

Our responsibility is clear. Together we must act to arrest the economic decline of developing countries. Interdependence and the quest for global harmony impose that responsibility on us. The special session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in April next year and the process of elaborating a new international development strategy are important opportunities for pursuing those goals.

Our action should also reflect the urgency of the situation. The framework for action must always be that which offers the most efficient means of co-operation. Whether it be bilateral, multilateral or economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, Guyana stands ready to play its part in our joint endeavours.

It is most fitting that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of the economic growth and development of developing countries, will be taking place at a time when the prestige of the United Nations has been restored. The Organization has begun again to assert its prime responsibility for the maintenance of peace and

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security. In this respect the Security Council has met constantly to review developments and to exercise its authority as the guarantor of world peace.

Much of the credit for those developments is due to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who has co-operated fully with Member States in the many initiatives taken to secure stability and progress in the international, political and economic system. His admirable annual report reflects the valuable work done this year to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations, and points with clarity to some steps which should be taken to achieve that result.

Over the years a sizeable corpus of ideas has developed with an eye to improving the machinery of the United Nations. It is Guyana's hope that those ideas can be fully examined and implemented to the benefit of our Organization and its operations.

The tendency towards attitudinal changes bodes well for the future of the United Nations and should, if pursued, enable it to realize its full potential. Now is the time to deepen this new-found faith in the United Nations so that it can proceed to expand the frontiers of achievement.

Clearly, new demands will be made on the Organization precisely as a result of the successes it has already scored. There will be, for example, a role entrusted to the United Nations to guarantee the scrupulous implementation of accords reached on the settlement of conflicts. If we are dilatory, the newly found prestige of the Organization will evaporate and leave the world once again prey to unwanted adventurism.

It is also important, as noted by the Secretary-General, that early preventive diplomacy should be more readily utilized, as it has distinct advantages over curative measures, which are often late, costly and less effective.

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At the beginning of this decade of peace and international law therefore, let us resolve fully to explore the advantage of resolving conflicts by political and legal means rather than by the threat or use of force. Let us also resolve to make more use of the International Court of Justice in the cause of peace.

At the apogee of success, the United Nations is ideally poised to launch a major offensive against the legion of problems which continue to besiege the world. Their solution requires the conflation of the interests of all Member States, developed and developing alike.

Let us at this session raise the banner of unity and co-operation, and from now on work towards the installation of a régime of durable peace and prosperity.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): Mr. President, ascending the steps which lead to this podium, and speaking before the United Nations General Assembly, is always a great honour and privilege. Today, this honour and privilege take on added significance for our delegation. I have the pleasure of conveying to you, and to the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, congratulations and best wishes on your unanimous election as President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Furthermore, I have the honour of conveying to you a personal congratulatory message from Father Walter H. Lini, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu. The Prime Minister sends his fondest regards to you, a friend and a man he knows to be not only a proud son of Nigeria, but also a proud son of Vanuatu. We recall that the honorary title of "Chief" was bestowed upon you at a custom ceremony during a visit you made to Vanuatu in 1985, in your capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. Thus, Nigeria's pride and joy on your election is shared by Vanuatu.

(Mr. Van Liercp, Vanuatu)

I will resist, for the sake of brevity, repeating the many words already spoken in praise of your diplomatic experience and skills. Instead, I will merely associate our delegation and myself with those words and the sentiments they express. We prefer to draw attention to four words, which those of us who are privileged to know you personally find most appropriate in describing you. Those four words are: sincerity, courage, dignity, and integrity. Those four qualities make you not only a proud son of your country and of Africa, but also of all those who cherish those virtues.

We join in the tribute paid to the Group of African States, particularly to the Governments of Cameroon and Egypt, by the Minister of External Affairs of Nigeria, when he addressed the General Assembly and expressed gratitude for the African consensus which led to your election. Furthermore, we associate ourselves with the very moving words of appreciation we have heard you address to our dear friend and brother, Mr. Paul Bamela Engo, the Permanent Representative of Cameroon. What you expressed on that occasion, Mr. President - with which we concur - were far more than the usual sentiments.

We welcome the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Ronald I. Spiers - a distinguished diplomat - to his new post, and we wish him well. We also congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, former Foreign Minister of Argentina, for a job well done. His presidency coincided with certain historic developments which have contributed to a new atmosphere that we must now profit from in our efforts to strengthen the United Nations, and prospects for justice and lasting world peace.

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There is no doubt that, in a real sense, the current international climate is far better than it has ever been within the lifetime of most of those who now inhabit this planet. We now have a chance finally to cross the threshold and ensure that mankind will not, through a nuclear conflict between the two super-Powers, intentionally destroy life as we know it. None the less, many major problems continue to plague mankind, and we believe that sincerity, courage, dignity and integrity continue to be essential qualities in the process of building and preserving justice, peace and a better world for every man, woman and child in every corner of the globe.

We welcome and applaud the new openness, mutual respect and generally friendlier atmosphere that characterize current relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, we would be less than true to ourselves, and to history, were we to forget that many of the things that plague mankind today are not consequences of the post-Second-World-War antagonisms between these two great countries but, instead, result from old contradictions and grievances that predate the cold war and reveal the imperfections of the human species, as well as of the various institutions we have shaped.

An astute observer once remarked, "Man's mad vanity is often mocked by life". Thus, while some raced recklessly to build and deploy newer and more powerful weapons of mass destruction, nature demonstrated, with repeated regularity, that it could outdo mankind by unleashing hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, floods and droughts that gave us more than enough death and devastation - if that was what we wanted. While some experimented with, and developed, silent killers, such as chemical and bacteriological agents, nature gave us more than enough infectious diseases to satisfy any longing we might have to inflict pain and suffering on

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other human beings. While some obsessively consumed addictive drugs with hedonistic fervour, nature revealed that, eventually, those consumers become themselves consumed by their obsession.

While some raced selfishly to build temples of pagan idolatry to material wealth, with little regard for the future well-being of our planet, nature responded to the repeated violation of our environment the only way it could - by revealing how scarce are the earth's resources, and how precarious its ability to support and sustain life. While some have expended their energy in misguided efforts to deny the humanity of others, merely because of differences in skin pigmentation, religious beliefs, cultural nuances, language or gender, nature has repeatedly revealed that if we cannot now be united in life we will most assuredly be for ever united in death.

It is time for us all to realize that if every one of us does not have a future none of us shall have a future. Thus, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines, Mr. Raul S. Manglapus, spoke for us all - not only for the poor people of his country - when, on 27 September 1989, he so eloquently stated, among other things:

"Today a human being is born not only with original sin but also with original debt." (A/44/PV.9, p. 38)

This chilling reality, substantiated by the fact that the developing world now owes the developed world more than \$1.3 trillion, portends a future without hope for most of the world's people. Furthermore, this debt, which has already reached unmanageable proportions, continues to grow and grow and grow, with no apparent end in sight.

We would be hard-pressed to recall a recent international meeting at which a discussion of the debt crisis, and other aspects of a general appeal for economic

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justice, had not played a prominent role. There are some encouraging signs that the urgency of this message has finally begun to penetrate. However, every day that this problem is left unresolved in a comprehensive fashion by the international community draws the developing countries of the world nearer to an economic abyss and a potentially devastating social apocalypse.

Not all of the economic ills of the developing countries result from the actions - or lack of action - of the developed world. Naturally, developing countries must shoulder a fair share of the responsibility for the general malaise that exists in so many of their own economies. However, deteriorating terms of trade - characterized by severely depressed commodity prices, reverse flows of capital, and increasing protectionist pressures - have, for most of the world, made appeals for international economic justice a matter of great urgency.

Greater fiscal responsibility and restraint are needed, but certainly not at the expense of those who are the most disadvantaged in the various developing countries. This would not only be impolitic; it would also be immoral.

Ironically, those who are among the first to counsel the adoption of rather severe fiscal restraints with respect to the social sectors of developing countries are often among the last to adopt far milder restraints themselves when it comes to military expenditures for new methods of death and destruction. Developing countries generally find it difficult to obtain sufficient economic credits to develop social infrastructure. The same countries usually find it easier to obtain economic credits to fuel excessive military expenditures.

While some nations were busy devoting considerable resources and energy to building and maintaining elaborate military defences against real and imagined external enemies, another, less manageable and more insidious, foe of us all was also busy. This foe developed an ability to threaten us all, regardless of our

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size, regardless of our wealth, regardless of our power, regardless of our professed beliefs. This foe respects no international border, no set of laws, and no boundaries of decency. This foe is as brutal, as unprincipled and as immoral as was an earlier foe - the international traffic in human beings known as the slave trade. Today's foe - the international traffic in narcotic drugs - poses a clear and present danger to contemporary civilized society. What it cannot seduce, it attempts to corrupt; what it cannot corrupt, it attempts to intimidate; what it cannot intimidate, it attempts to kill and destroy.

Those who engage in this traffic deserve neither our sympathy nor our mercy. They are evil incarnate, and must be confronted with all means at our disposal, just as the slave traders of earlier generations were confronted by decent human beings and civilized Governments and institutions, and just as latter-day practitioners of genocide were confronted by the international community during the Second World War, and later at international tribunals, which for ever condemned crimes against humanity.

Today, the courage of the Government and people of Colombia presents us with an historic challenge. Should we fail to meet that challenge - should we allow Colombia to stand alone in its confrontation with evil - we shall have written the epitaph of modern civilization. The message of Mr. Virgilio Barco, President of Colombia, delivered here at the General Assembly on 29 September 1989, moved us all to stand in unison and applaud. Let that message also lead us to stand in unison and fight for the future of our respective peoples - for the future of our children.

A young playwright, raised in a section of our host city that was recently in the news, has crafted a work striking in its similarities to a tragic event that occurred recently in his former neighbourhood. The plot of his play centres on

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an act of mindless racial violence and exposes the raw emotions of the play's characters. At the play's conclusion, a man who had stood by and watched the fatal beating of the black victim is surprised by the reaction of his girlfriend. To exculpate himself, he exclaims:

"... life is short. The past is past. Let's worry about us. When the bomb hits, we're all gonna die anyways."

She pointedly replies:

"The world's not going to end with a bomb. It's going to end with people like you standing around doing nothing."

One week after the play went into rehearsal, a tragic and much-publicized killing occurred in the community where the author had been raised and where the play was set. The theme of the play could just as easily have been about the international community's inaction in the face of drug trafficking; it could just as easily have been about how the world has stood around watching the violent disintegration of Lebanon; it could just as easily have been about how some of us have stood around watching the intifadah in the occupied territories of Palestine.

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The theme of the play could just as easily have been about those who have been satisfied to be spectators each time the people of South Africa have demonstrated that they have had more than their fill of apartheid. The theme could just as easily have been about those who chose to be spectators when the people of Namibia, the people of New Caledonia, or the people of other Non-Self-Governing Territories, decided to reclaim their own identities, their own sovereignty, their own futures.

In this regard, we note the very moving appeal of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Mr. João de Deus Pinheiro, that the international community not remain indifferent to the situation in East Timor. The Government and the people of Vanuatu will never be indifferent to conditions in East Timor, Western Sahara, or other small Territories which some tend to overlook when they assess the current state of international relations. To us, the world has not progressed nearly as far as we would like to believe, if the peoples of those small Territories are not allowed freely to express their will and determine their respective futures.

Closer to Vanuatu's own shores, the people of New Caledonia and the Government of France have embarked on an imaginative initiative which could prove capable of providing a framework for a genuine act of self-determination and a just and lasting solution to the trouble-plagued history of that South Pacific Territory. We continue to support an early transition to an independent New Caledonia in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of New Caledonia's colonized people.

The Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries continue to view the decolonization process as an important international priority. At the Ninth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, the Heads of State or Government reiterated and reaffirmed their commitment to the process by which most of the countries represented here today have won their political independence. On the specific subject of New Caledonia they:

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"strongly urged that the question ... 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."

The important process of dialogue has led to the restoration of peace and a calm political atmosphere in New Caledonia. As a neighbouring country, Vanuatu applauds the measures taken to end the violence and reform the old social order. We will continue to support the process under way in New Caledonia so long as its people continue to work within that framework, and to view that process as a vehicle for the political evolution of their country.

We are grateful for the understanding and support received from the international community on this issue. We know it is not always easy to understand and appreciate all of the nuances emanating from cries for justice by the people of a small Territory in a distant region. We also know it is not always easy - owing to other constraints and limitations - for a great Power to respond in a positive manner. France has demonstrated a unique greatness, as well as courage and compassion, by its willingness to listen to the grievances of New Caledonia's people, and by its willingness to fashion bold new initiatives in an effort to address those grievances.

Nothing would please us more than to believe that the Government of South Africa is now possessed of the greatness, the courage, and the compassion to live up to its various undertakings to promote the decolonization of Namibia, and to help forge a new South Africa built on honesty, justice, and equality. However, we share the scepticism of those who doubt the sincerity of the current rulers of Pretoria.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Namibia is on its way to independence despite the many road-blocks erected by the apartheid régime. We rejoice at the prospect of an independent Namibia assuming its rightful place within the community of nations. However, the rest of the world must assure that South Africa lives up to its commitments - all of its commitments - and not just those it finds convenient.

With respect to South Africa itself, it is clear that apartheid is doomed. This discredited doctrine of racial superiority has been repudiated by all, save those whose hearts and minds still reside in the early decades of the nineteenth century when the ownership of one human being by another was a socially acceptable method of attaining wealth and power.

Today, those who imprisoned Nelson Mandela find that in his confinement he is freer than they are as his gaolers. His freedom is the freedom of a dignity that could never be diminished, a will that could never be broken, a conscience that could never be compromised. The confinement of his gaolers is the moral confinement of those who are consumed by nothing but greed and hatred.

Those who govern South Africa attempted the impossible. They attempted the indefinite imprisonment of an entire country. Such repression may succeed temporarily, but history teaches that such success is always short-lived. Today, the largest gaolbreak in history is occurring. Soon South Africa will be free, and all of that country's people can share its wealth and will share its future.

Hurricane Hugo, which recently battered the Eastern Caribbean and parts of the United States, has added its name to the long list of natural disasters that continue to plague mankind. We extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims of Hugo and join in appeals for emergency and long-term assistance to help rebuild what was destroyed.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

As horrible as the consequences of the hurricane were, however, we cannot help but note that for some unfathomable reason, mankind still seems determined to match or even exceed nature in its destructive capabilities. The follies of mankind appear to have no limits.

Thus, while we mourn the victims of hurricane Hugo, nuclear testing continues in the South Pacific. Why? We cannot understand. Every delegation that has participated in the general debate has commented on a new positive international atmosphere and greatly enhanced prospects for world peace. Why, then, must the people of the South Pacific continue to see their environment violated by the testing of nuclear weapons? For what conflict are these weapons necessary? Against whom have the peace-loving peoples of the Pacific sinned? Why must our lands, our waters, and our skies be used to test weapons that the people of no other region want tested on their lands, in their waters, or in their skies?

We are pleased by recent expressions of concern for the environment. However, we find considerable irony in these expressions of concern. We are waiting for new voices to join us in appealing for an end to nuclear testing in our environment. We are waiting for new voices to join us in appealing for an end to the dumping of hazardous materials in our environment. We are waiting for new voices to join us in an appeal for an immediate end to the drift-net fishing that is devastating our marine ecology. We are waiting for new voices to join us in appealing for a more equitable and universal distribution of the resources that have already been extracted from the Earth.

We will continue to raise and articulate our strong environmental concerns. We will do so not to keep pace with any existing fashion, nor because of a new awareness of how fragile is the thread by which the environment supports life on

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

this planet. Instead, we will do so because of our traditional respect for the very delicate balance of life we call our environment. We will do so because of our concern for the future, and because we know that our children - and their children - have no other place to go but the four corners of the Earth. We will do so because we do not want our world to end as a result of too many of us doing nothing - or not enough - when so much needs to be done.

THE PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Vanuatu, and would request him to send a message to the Prime Minister telling him that I accept the kind message he sent to me with humility and appreciation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Assembly that item 156, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis", which the Assembly had decided to consider on a priority basis, will be taken up as the second item on Thursday, 12 October 1989, in the afternoon.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. CARTER (Bahamas): I am happy warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Presidency. The Bahamas is confident that your vast experience and reputation as an outstanding diplomat will greatly facilitate your work at this session and enhance its success. May I also express deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, for the exceptional way in which he presided over our deliberations at the forty-third session.

Our Secretary-General has always been an untiring champion of peace, and much of the success which we have realized since our last session was due to his expert leadership. The Bahamas warmly congratulates him for his outstanding efforts over the past year.

I address this body only two short weeks after hurricane Hugo unleashed a mighty fury against our neighbours in the eastern Caribbean and along the south-east border of our host country. I wish on behalf of the Government and people of the Bahamas to record our special sympathy to those countries which suffered tremendous human and financial loss. We call on the international

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

community to render every possible assistance, particularly to those small Caribbean States that have suffered overwhelming damage to the very foundation of their economic existence.

It is now 1989, the final year of the decade of the 1980s. We are at a significant crossroads in human affairs, at which we must both reflect on the successes and the frustrations of the 1980s and look forward optimistically to the challenges of the 1990s. There is justification for optimism, no matter how limited or qualified. It became evident during the forty-third session of the Assembly that a new era of hope and co-operation had dawned and inspired new enthusiasm for the relevance of our Organization. With this new era of hope has also come renewed prestige, renewed credibility and a greater commitment to efficiency at the United Nations. The lessening of tensions between the super-Powers and the continued international strides towards the reduction in military arsenals in Europe are further causes for our renewed optimism.

There has been progress and/or intensified efforts in negotiations that could lead to the peaceful resolution of disputes in Central America, Angola, Afghanistan and Kampuchea, and between Iran and Iraq. The Bahamas applauds the progress made in Namibia and looks forward to welcoming it into the community of nations.

Another significant success is the new international Convention against the traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, adopted in December 1988. Our Organization also received formal accolades on 29 September 1988, when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for peace-keeping. Since then, two new United Nations forces have been dispatched to monitor cease-fire agreements in Afghanistan and on the Iran-Iraq border. Another peace-keeping force has been organized for Namibia, and now a verification mission for Central America is being planned.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

Those laudable achievements notwithstanding, the world community continues to encounter frustrations. Consequently, our Organization's agenda is constantly expanding with corresponding demands on its already scarce resources.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons threatens global annihilation. Furthermore, recourse to conventional weapons also restricts already limited resources for social welfare, especially in a majority of developing countries. It is therefore incumbent upon responsible Governments to apply qualitative measures on the political factors that determine their armament policies.*

The Bahamas was among those States that were disappointed that greater progress was not possible at the last session of the Disarmament Commission. The Bahamas nevertheless embraces the small progress made, and hopes that this step-by-step approach will bear greater fruit in the future. For this reason the Bahamas has joined those States calling for the convening of an amendment conference to convert the existing partial test-ban treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and welcomes the fourth review conference scheduled for 1990. The Bahamas is encouraged by the statements made in this debate by the President of the United States of America and the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union with respect to chemical weapons and hopes that the international community will lend the necessary support for the total eradication of those weapons, which have such devastating and indiscriminate effects.

Many nations continue to be saddled with serious economic problems and consequently must tackle the threat of poverty, restrictive protectionism, the staggering debt burden and falling commodity prices. The current state of the

* Mr. Jaya (Brunei Darussalam), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

world economy clearly demonstrates the urgent need for dialogue and an integrated approach to solving problems between North and South which would allow developing countries to move from adjustment to development.

The Bahamas, therefore, hopes for the success of the upcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation. The special session can provide us with the opportunity to take stock of the changes that have taken place in the 1980s as we seek agreement on the principles that should guide us into the 1990s and beyond. This will ensure a comprehensive and practical international development strategy for the fourth Development Decade. The Bahamas would wish to see the international development strategy address the social consequences of the present negative economic environment.

In particular, we believe that the United Nations should undertake a direct and comprehensive examination of the plight of millions of people in the developing world, who, because of poverty and hunger, are obliged to risk their very lives seeking to meet the bare necessities for survival in foreign countries. For the most part, the exodus is from one developing country to another. These people fall between the cracks of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and migrant-worker agreements. The assistance afforded to political refugees is not available to those migrating for economic reasons. Neither can the countries in which they arrive look to the international community to alleviate the economic and social burdens which such migration imposes. There is an urgent need for the international community to address this critical issue. To the extent possible, the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade should contain concrete co-operative measures to assist those obliged to migrate for economic reasons and those developing countries which must confront this problem.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

Now I wish to call attention to the plight of our Caribbean neighbour, the Republic of Haiti, whose people are involved in a valiant struggle to free themselves from centuries of economic and social deprivation while at the same time seeking to build the democratic institutions necessary for greater stability. It is particularly urgent, then, that international organizations and donor countries give support to the aspirations of the Haitian people by restoring and increasing technical and financial assistance to that nation.

With respect to Central America we are encouraged by the commitment of those regional Governments to seek a firm and lasting peace in the region, as demonstrated by the Tela Declaration of 7 August 1989. The Bahamas calls on all States to refrain from any activity that could or would frustrate those peace efforts and/or exacerbate the conflict. We are particularly mindful that, while the region must solve its own problems free from the threat of external interference, the international community should also lend every possible assistance and moral and material support to the peace process and provide essential economic aid to those ravaged by years of war.

My Government wishes to record its solidarity with the Panamanian people in their efforts to install a democratically elected Government in the Republic of Panama. The Bahamas strongly endorses the statement of the Organization of American States that the solution to the Panamanian problem is the exclusive province of the Panamanians, but also that in the solution to the Panamanian crisis the observance of democratic principles must be ensured in the free exercise of the sovereignty and self-determination of the Panamanian people.

Indeed, the Bahamas reaffirms the right of all States in our region to exist in peace and in secure boundaries. We call upon all to recognize and respect the sovereign territorial rights of all States in the region, including Belize and Guyana.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

Peace in the Middle East continues to elude us. While the Bahamas reaffirms its support of Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders, it also reiterates its support for the right of Palestinians to their own State. The Palestinian question is but one element of the complex situation obtaining in the Middle East. The problems of Lebanon also beg solution.

Participation in the community of nations necessarily implies, for its survival and good order, agreement with and support of the standards and principles enunciated by that community. As regards respect for human rights those standards are succinctly set out in the Charter of the United Nations and further elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When a Government permits and commits wanton acts and atrocities against its citizens its actions reverberate beyond national boundaries to challenge the most fundamental principles of the international community. The Bahamas agrees that in such circumstances human rights become a legitimate subject for international concern. Recourse for the citizens must then be to the community of nations.

It is in connection with the violation of human rights that I now wish to address the situation in South Africa. While pleased at the progress made in Namibia and Angola, the Bahamas must express its deep concern that the system of apartheid still flourishes in South Africa. Moreover, the racially restricted political enfranchisement further attests to the abuses to which the South African Government continues to subject the majority of the people of South Africa.

The Bahamas is convinced that the international community has not yet exhausted strategies to bring pressure to bear effectively on South Africa to dismantle apartheid. We therefore fully support the convening of the special session of the General Assembly on the policies of apartheid scheduled to take place in December. We share the view that the imposition of comprehensive

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

mandatory sanctions is the most effective action available to the international community to force South Africa to bring an end to the abominable system of apartheid.

The abuse of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances persist as one of the most formidable challenges to mankind, wreaking havoc on societies, disrupting economies and threatening the security of nations world-wide. Colossal efforts have been expended to stem the tide of the illicit drug trade; yet it has not been arrested, nor has demand diminished.

The Prime Minister of the Bahamas, the Right Honourable Sir Lynden O. Pindling, in a statement to The Los Angeles Times's Washington Bureau on 28 September 1989, commenting on some of the possible reasons for this state of affairs, said:

"Law enforcement turf wars have hindered the drug war, irresponsible politicians have selfishly politicized it and criminal cartels have been allowed to emerge to the point where they can challenge the authority of a democratically elected government with full-scale terrorism."

As victims of a collective geography that traps them between the drug-producer nations of the South and large consumer markets in the North, the Bahamas and its Caribbean neighbours have felt acutely the impact of the drug menace. Our Caribbean region ranks among the most trafficked transit routes for the illicit drug trade. The Prime Minister summed up the unique position of the Bahamas as a transit State, remarking:

"We have our finger on the pulse of the drug trade, the methods and capabilities of the producers and demand and tactics of the consumers."

Moreover, as a transit State the Bahamas does not have the option of removing itself from this theatre of war. So we have stood and fought, sometimes alone,

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sometimes in close co-operation with our neighbours. We are aware, however, that co-operative efforts yield best results and firmly subscribe to the principle of collective responsibility for confronting the drug menace, which is increasingly recognized internationally.

This principle is interwoven into the provisions of the recently adopted United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The Bahamas is proud to be the country to begin the process of ratification of that important instrument and has begun implementing the Convention in its national legislation and its bilateral, regional and international co-operative efforts. We urge all Governments signatories to the Convention to ratify it early so that it may be added to the international drug-control arsenal.

The Bahamas recognizes and commends the considerable efforts of the United Nations in the field of drug control, particularly its standard-setting efforts. The Bahamas is of the opinion, nevertheless, that the United Nations should boldly go further. As the Prime Minister of the Bahamas contended in his recent address:

"The time has come for a multilateral force under the auspices of the United Nations to focus on the eradication of drugs and to assist countries that seek help on terms that they can accept. Given the rise of narco-terrorism and the paramilitary capability of producers to defend their opium, coca and marijuana fields, as well as production laboratories, there ought to be an international body to turn to for help."

Surely many countries here have considered this option. Some, like the States of the Caribbean community on a Jamaican initiative, have articulated this possibility and have placed it on the international agenda. Clearly, the proposal presents both a challenge and a dilemma for, as the Prime Minister of the Bahamas recognized:

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"The political implications and consequences of outside military intervention against drug kingpins in producing nations places those Governments in the untenable position of having to choose between accepting the help of a friend in waging an effective eradication war against a deadly enemy and risking its political mandate to govern, as drug gangs exploit nationalist sentiments against big-Power intervention."

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

To mitigate the obvious difficulties that this dilemma engenders, the Prime Minister cautions that

"If troops are required, Governments should have the sole right to determine the strength and composition of a multilateral force if they wish to deploy one alongside their own troops, as well as to determine the length and terms of the force's deployment".

The Prime Minister also visualized that a special eradication fund could be established to finance men and materiel, technical support, relocation assistance and crop-substitution programmes for local population in eradication zones. We recognize that the expertise and experience of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, and other United Nations drug-control bodies, and international agencies and organizations concerned with drug-abuse control would be invaluable to such a fund. The Prime Minister also envisages a narcotics enforcement support office at the United Nations, to augment, not replace, efforts of producing countries.

The Bahamas commends those proposals for consideration - together with the proposal for an international criminal court to deal with drug-related crimes and other transborder criminal transgressions - confident that, if implemented, they would enhance the capacity of the system to confront the drug menace.

In the same vein, the Bahamas in early 1988 joined its voice to that of the Congress of the United States of America, and of Colombia, in calling for a hemispheric meeting at the Heads of Government level to co-ordinate national responses to halt the drug traffickers in the Americas. The President of the United States has now endorsed that call for a meeting of Heads of Government of the countries most affected by the drug traffic.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

As a small State systematically victimized by the drug cartels and confronted with the consequences of the traffic and abuse of drugs, the Bahamas is, I believe, ideally placed to serve as a venue for a hemispheric conclave of Heads of State, and has so indicated to other beleaguered Governments of the region. We believe that a hemispheric summit would be the ideal forum for hammering out a multinational strategy for co-operation between States in enforcement, treatment, rehabilitation and demand-reduction efforts.

The Bahamas would wish also to emphasize the importance of drug-demand-reduction strategies to the war against drugs, and in this regard urges fullest political support for the international conference on demand reduction which the United Kingdom proposes to convene in 1990.

The Bahamas, though a small country, has played its role on the international stage. In the face of a hostile economic world environment, we have tried through conscious and deliberate national policy to create a country whose foundations are stability, prosperity and peace.

The Bahamas is concerned about the continuing degradation of the world environment, which if it remains unchecked, will threaten the very survival of the human species. Man-made pollutants are having a profound negative effect on the environment, and the unchecked exploitation of the limited resources make depletion a very real probability. Additionally, the vagaries of natural disasters have wreaked havoc on the environment.

We are especially concerned because the primary industries on which the Bahamas bases its economic development - tourism and the exploitation of marine resources - are dependent on a healthy environment. The Bahamas is in accord with the international community in its efforts to preserve the environment for future

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generations of mankind. The Bahamas, therefore, fully supports the convening of the second world conference on environment and development, scheduled for 1992.

1992 will also mark the quincentenary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas. The terrible legacies of colonial domination of the original peoples of the Americas and the brutal aberration of slavery, which gave rise to cruelly unequal societies in the Americas, have rightfully stirred strong emotions within the community of nations. Those strong emotions, however, should not prevent us from recognizing the energy and thirst for knowledge which inspired Christopher Columbus and other nautical explorers in the fifteenth century. It is the belief of my Government that the arrival of Christopher Columbus in this hemisphere, almost 500 years ago, at San Salvador in the Bahamas opened a new chapter of history, which resulted in the convergence of many worlds and many cultures. Today, proud independent countries of the Americas stand in testimony to the universality of mankind and its ability to transcend even the most dire obstacles in order to create multiracial societies, unprecedented elsewhere in our world. The Bahamas will use the occasion of the quincentenary to reflect on the past, which it considers an invaluable guide for the future, and to celebrate the best of what we are and what we can yet achieve as peoples of the Americas.

We have come as Member States to lay before the Organization our common problems, seeking common solutions. Yet, as we challenge the United Nations to be the important forum it needs to be, we find its capacity severely restricted by its precarious financial situation. While we call for a more effective role for the United Nations, Member States often demonstrate a lack of necessary political will, pleading either hardship or dissatisfaction. By so doing, many shirk their responsibilities which are critical to making the Organization financially viable and therefore effective.

(Mr. Carter, Bahamas)

Political will is a factor not only at the level of finances, but also in the programmes and overall co-ordination of the United Nations system. Duplication of agendas and programming in various agencies has led to further demands on already-over-stretched resources. Lack of flexibility and insistence on furthering national policies in absolute disregard for, and in many cases to the detriment of, other nations represent additional major obstacles to the effective and efficient functioning of the United Nations.

It is evident that the challenges posed by the issues I have highlighted can be properly addressed only by international collaboration and co-operation on a consistent basis. The successes achieved last year clearly demonstrate the value of multilateralism. It needs hardly be said that the United Nations is best placed for such multilateral co-operation.

The United Nations remains the most appropriate organ for the resolution of conflict and the solution of our global problems. The Bahamas, as in the past, gives our world body its total support, for it is the best hope for the peace and security of mankind.

Mr. da GRACA (Sao Tome and Principe) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and on my own behalf, I have the honour and pleasure to extend to the President our warmest congratulations on his election to preside over the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His election is recognition at the international level of his high competence and wide experience as a diplomat and a statesman. It is also testimony to the international community's high appreciation of his country, Nigeria, which plays an outstanding role on the African continent in the economic and political spheres. I assure him that my delegation considers it an absolute duty to give its complete support to that outstanding son of Africa in the important mission that has rightly been entrusted to him.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, on his outstanding performance in presiding over the forty-third session, whose highly satisfactory and positive results can in part be attributed to his dedication and commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.

Allow me also to express my admiration and respect for the dynamic and dedicated work undertaken by our Organization's Secretary-General. His activities have made more effective the actions taken by the United Nations, actions which have been contributed to the present strengthening of its credibility and its role at the multilateral level. The Secretary-General should be praised for his far-sightedness, his constant efforts and the courage with which he has been seeking solutions to some of the regional conflicts affecting the world.

We should work towards the objective of transforming the United Nations into a privileged place for multilateral analysis at the political level of the crucial questions confronting the world and mankind.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

An important and decisive change creating favourable conditions for the realization of the potential of the United Nations is the fact that the great Powers now agree on revitalizing the Organization, which they had underrated for so long. They recognize that the United Nations is an indispensable instrument in the creation of a peaceful and secure world and in the development of international co-operation embracing all peoples and nations in the search for solutions to the problems of the world and its inhabitants.

Peace is the necessary condition for the development of a nation's well being. Without peace, all efforts to increase the material and spiritual well being of men will be in vain.

In the past three years we have travelled a very promising path in that regard. There has been a deep and positive transformation of the international situation. At the basis of that evolution lies the relaxation in relations between the two super-Powers, relations which have gone from a long confrontation and cold war to the attitude of co-operation and understanding that characterizes their relations today. This détente does not seem to have the purely cyclical character that détente had before; we believe that it results from a rational approach to the differences between the two main systems in the world.

We can only come to the unquestionable conclusion that the two rival socio-political systems cannot compete by force of arms in this nuclear era, for that would inexorably lead to the annihilation of the human race.

Secondly, as a result of the uncontrolled nuclear and conventional arms race, the political tensions between the two political and military world blocs were compromising the future and the economic balance of the Soviet Union, the United States and the international community as a whole.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

Thanks to an awareness of that reality and an understanding of it, a new political and military mentality has begun to gain strength at the international level and to condition the behaviour of several countries in foreign policy, thus making it more and more feasible to have truly peaceful coexistence based on the principles of humanized law - that is, giving priority to universal human values, as opposed to mere ideology.

The first concrete results of that trend are evidenced in the progress achieved in disarmament and in the emphasis being placed on the peaceful solution of regional conflicts.

International security and the individual security of States cannot be strengthened through the accumulation of arms; on the contrary, that can only bring greater insecurity and tension, inevitably leading to a war-like confrontation. Only the reduction of arms in a spirit of trust and multiform co-operation between States can safeguard peace, which is priceless for mankind.

The signing in Washington in December 1987 of the agreement on the dismantling of medium- and short-range nuclear missiles was an event of extraordinary historic importance, as a turning-point in prospects of disarmament, which people from all nations want to see in the form of general and complete disarmament, and the emergence of a peaceful world that will use available human and material resources for the development and happiness of mankind.

Measures have been taken that reveal the political desire of the two super-Powers to move towards the disarmament process. We are hopeful that the so-called Jackson Hole spirit will give an impulse to the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), the Conference in Geneva and the Vienna talks. But we should be aware that nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament does not depend only on

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

the super-Powers, and that it will not succeed without the participation of all countries.

We know that we cannot really blame foreign Powers for the bloody ethnic, religious, territorial and political national and international conflicts that engulf third world countries.

It is scandalous that while 30 per cent of the people of Africa, Asia and the Middle East are affected by numerous diseases, or are undernourished, and have a very high illiteracy rate, there are countries that spend 20 per cent of their budgets on armaments, which is much more than they spend on health and education combined.

The improvement in the world-wide political environment is evident. In this regard, it has been possible to obtain some concrete results in the search for peaceful solutions to regional conflicts, even though barriers have been encountered with regard to some cases that started well. Those conflicts constitute an obstacle to the economic and social development efforts of several developing countries, dangerously upset international relations and cause suffering, misery and hunger.

The use of United Nations principles and mechanisms was decisive in the progress achieved during the process leading to a peaceful solution of some conflicts.

Sao Tome and Principe, despite its modest means as a small State, participates in the efforts of the international community to suppress those focal points of tension. Above all, it has played an active role in the efforts to achieve peace in Angola.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

President Manuel Pinto da Costa was part of a group of eight Heads of State who met in Luanda on 16 May. He contributed to the analysis and adoption of the peace plan presented by the People's Republic of Angola. That country's Government, adopting a courageous and wise attitude, agreed to specific prospects for national reconciliation and the establishment of peace, aware as it was of the martyrdom of its people through almost three decades of war.

A fair and lasting solution was imminent with the approval of the Luanda peace plan at the Summit of 18 Heads of State in Gbadolite, based on the African experience in the solution of similar cases. But external interference caused by foreign interests hostile to the people's cause created some difficulties in the implementation of the obligations then assumed.

However we will continue to work towards an African solution to this painful conflict so that the People's Republic of Angola will finally be able to achieve progress and happiness for its people. We are confident that the process that has been started will proceed until peace is achieved.

Namibia, a neighbouring country of the People's Republic of Angola, from which it received wide support that led to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), will shortly accede to independence.

No attempt at sabotage will prevent the Namibian people from finally achieving the objectives for which it fought for so many years. We believe that the South West Africa People's Organization, with the popular support it enjoys, will with pragmatism and realism recognize the aspirations of the Namibian people.

Namibia's independence day will be a historic day for the entire continent. It will mark the end of the dreadful colonial era in Africa.

Unfortunately, the day on which the African people will be able to rid its continent of that open wound, that crime against humanity in South Africa called apartheid, is distant and hard to reach.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

Despite the very open and promising declarations favouring positive change made by President de Klerk, the international community must continue to pressure South Africa politically, economically and morally because apartheid cannot just undergo some adjustments; apartheid is not reformable: it has to be completely abolished.

If South Africa wishes to initiate a dialogue with South African nationalists for the construction of a democratic and multiracial society, it should immediately free Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners, cancel interdictions of the African National Congress of South Africa and all other nationalist parties and anti-apartheid organizations and put an end to the state of emergency.

Still addressing the southern African zone-full of economic potential that must await peace and co-operation among all to be profitable - we will firmly support the wise and patriotic decisions of our Mozambican brothers of FRELIMO, whose aim is to promote national reconciliation and achieve peace through dialogue with their misguided fellow countrymen.

Still regarding the conflicts on the African continent, we welcome the signing on 31 August of the Algerian agreement, which has practically put an end to the Chad-Libya diferendo in the Aouzou zone, keeping away the spectre of renewed armed confrontation among brotherly peoples.

In Western Sahara, we hope that flexibility will prevail and that it soon be possible to overcome any obstacles that may emerge regarding the carrying out of the "referendum" for the self-determination of the Saharan people on which interested parties are in accord.

The problem between Senegal and Mauritania was traumatic for all Africans owing to the historical and cultural ties that unite those two neighbouring

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

countries and the nature of the conflict. As always we can rely on the farsightedness of intervention by President Mubarak for a fair solution of the situation and renewal of harmony between all Senegalese and Mauritians.

In the Middle East, the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at a meeting of the Palestine National Council, held in Algeria in November 1988, opened wide perspectives, created a new emphasis and stimulated new proposals for the solution of the conflict so that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence can be finally recognized and all people in the region may live in peace and safety within internationally recognized and guaranteed borders. There is near-unanimity within the international community regarding the necessity to consider further steps leading to an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations that will reunite all interested parties, including the PLO, the sole and legal representative of the Palestinian people.*

We regret that Iran and Iraq, two countries that belong to the Non-Aligned Movement, after a long and cruel war with heavy human and economic losses, cannot overcome their differences and obstacles to the replacement of confrontation and disagreement with co-operation and solidarity.

The situation in Afghanistan and Cambodia changed qualitatively from the moment the foreign troops left, but to achieve peace it is necessary that internal factions resist the temptation to use force and that they engage in dialogue for the creation of Governments that will represent all political forces, without foreign interference.

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

In Central America, the recent Tela summit, heir to the spirit of Esquipulas II, created solid bases for positive evolution and offered a foretaste of the democracy and peace for which the region yearns.

Notwithstanding hopes regarding the process of eliminating regional tensions, we know we are still far from living in a peaceful and violence-free world in which the interests of every country and people are taken into consideration.

We in Sao Tome and Principe are increasingly concerned about the occupation of East Timor, which makes it impossible for its people to enjoy its legal right to self-determination. We give our support to Portugal as the administering Power in its commendable efforts to find a fair solution to this matter through dialogue with Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General, within the framework of the mandate given to him by the General Assembly in resolution 37/30.

Experts of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development recently announced their conviction, based on analysis of investment, inflation and other data, that the industrialized world has entered a new time of growth similar to that of the 1950s and 1960s.

This has made more apparent and shocking the paradox of the economic situation prevailing in third world countries - and particularly in Africa - which is characterized by a deep and infrastructural crisis.

(Mr. da Graca, Sao Tome and Principe)

The world previously faced a serious threat from the cold war and the confrontation between the blocs, which could have brought about the nuclear extermination of the whole human race. Even if we have escaped this nightmare with the relaxation of tension between East and West, there remains another threat resulting from the widening economic gap between North and South, the conflict between rich and poor.

Industrialized countries are beginning to understand that this problem should be treated as a global problem affecting all mankind. In fact the international division of labour gives raw material producers little reason for hope in their development efforts, which are paralysed by the accumulation of external debt.

With falling prices of raw materials in the 1980s foreign trade ceased to be a tool for the economic development of our countries. In Sao Tome and Principe we are now living with a serious economic and financial crisis caused by the abrupt fall in the price of our only export product, cocoa. Today, our partners in the North have come to the conclusion that it is unrealistic to insist on total payment of the debt and that it is necessary to reduce or in some cases cancel it. We express our satisfaction at the steps already taken by some industrialized countries. Only by facilitating new capital flows on advantageous terms for poor countries and promoting a reorganization of international economic relations will it be possible to avoid an uncontrollable increase of the debt.

The events that will take place next year - that is, the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, the adoption of the United Nations international strategy for development and the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries - should make a significant contribution to this necessary reorganization. The establishment of a more favourable international environment for third world countries will enable them to

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promote rational utilization of their resources and to adopt modern administrative methods. Above all, since development is essentially a cultural phenomenon which requires the active and free participation of a conscious citizenry, we must fight for the general establishment of democratic Governments that will allow freedom to criticize and the development of the creativity of our people, which is a sine qua non of true development.

In a world of positive political change and phenomenal developments in technology and science which create prospects for a better future for mankind there remain, unfortunately, factors of apprehension and regression.

The illegal consumption of and traffic in drugs causes serious and complex human, social and political problems. The events in Colombia have shown how far the illegal traffic in drugs and the economic power connected with it can put at risk the democratic and constitutional order of a country. Since this is a phenomenon whose tentacles spread to many places in the world, international co-operation is indispensable if the police are to struggle effectively against this scourge. But the deepest and greatest task will be to try by scientific and multidisciplinary means to identify and destroy the psychological and social roots of this scourge that leads millions of men and women, mostly young adults, to self-destruction through the consumption of drugs.

Terrorism is an irrational form of behaviour in a world that is marching towards the rationalization of its problems. Terrorism constitutes a threat to all countries in the world and the General Assembly, in resolution 40/61, has clearly condemned this inhuman practice. All members of the international community must co-ordinate their actions in the fight against terrorism and comply with existing anti-terrorist conventions and protocols. No cause can justify the murder of

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totally innocent men, women and children who have nothing whatsoever to do with these conflicts. No lofty purpose can be achieved through the use of these inhuman means.

Another painful concern of our times is the constant and progressive degradation of our environment, which puts at risk the future of our planet. This is one of the global problems that can be tackled only by means of international co-operation. In this connection, the conference on environment and development which it is proposed should be convened in 1992 would play a very important role.

We cannot forget that the causes of environmental degradation are different in the North and the South and thus require different remedies. In the majority of the countries of the South there is an extremely disturbing element of disruption of the balance between man and the environment. It is the frequent disproportion between the growing population and the availability of natural resources.

The bicentenary of the French Revolution of 1789, commemorated this year, has always been more than a purely French historic event. The greatest inheritance left by this event to people all over the world was the new idea of an open society, with the abolition of caste and privilege and the confirmation of the rights of men and citizens. It was then that the concept of people as the principal actors in political events began to assume full relevance. The Belgrade declaration last month emphasized the urgent necessity of promoting the rights and freedoms of man and respect for the life, dignity and ideas of individuals.

Contrary to theories that have been expressed, we believe that the major rights of citizens are political rights because only those rights can lead to the enjoyment of other rights. In Sao Tome and Principe, although adequate conditions,

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institutions and mechanisms have not yet been established, we have been taking important measures since our party's decision in October 1987 for the purpose of deepening the democratic process in our country. In the party in power - which is still the only political organization that we have, because of our historical context, but within which we allow for the existence of different currents of thought - and in our society, we have totally and fully guaranteed freedom of expression. In 1990 an electoral and constitutional decision package will crystallize this process.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize in this United Nations forum in which all the countries of the world, large and small, coexist, our trust and faith in an international community which is increasingly peaceful and economically, socially and spiritually more advanced.

It is my sincere hope that our work at this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly will contribute to the attainment of this objective.

Mr. JASDEO (Trinidad and Tobago): It is with considerable pleasure that I extend to you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. We are heartened that a diplomat and negotiator as skilful, adept and experienced as yourself, representing a country with which Trinidad and Tobago maintains very warm and friendly relations, will usher this Organization into the decade of the 1990s - a period not only of much hope and promise, but also of innumerable challenges. My delegation is confident that you are more than equal to the task.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, on his able stewardship of the General Assembly at its forty-third session and on the effective manner in which he discharged his important responsibilities.

It is indeed gratifying that the fiftieth anniversary of the cataclysmic conflict that led to the establishment of the United Nations should coincide with a renewal of faith and confidence in the capacity of the world Organization to resolve conflicts and to maintain international peace and security. The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has underlined this welcome trend in his excellent report on the work of the Organization.

A number of reasons explain this profound change in attitude to the United Nations. The retreat from the bloc politics of the cold war era and the rapprochement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have created an improved international climate. This has in great part allayed the mutual fears and suspicions of the two super-Powers which, over the preceding years, had neutralized all attempts by the United Nations to carry out the functions for which it had been created.

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There is another, perhaps more important reason, however. It is the belated recognition by the major players on the international scene of the severe limitations placed on their ability to resolve problems unilaterally. Power and influence are now diffused among a multiplicity of States, all of which must take into account the complex web of interlocking interests spun by an increasingly interdependent world. The re-emergence of consensus between the super-Powers and the resurgence of multilateralism, two of the key mechanisms in the Charter, can only redound to the benefit of the United Nations and of the entire international community. Recent developments in the field of disarmament reflect this clearly.

In the context of the re-emergence of consensus, the expressed desire of the United States and the Soviet Union to work towards the elimination of chemical weapons is a promising advance on their earlier agreement with respect to intermediate and shorter-range missiles. Recent experience in regional conflicts makes it imperative that a multilateral convention be concluded to effect the total elimination of chemical weapons from the armouries of all States. Such a convention, an objective of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, must include prohibitions on the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The improved international climate and a keener perception of the increasingly burdensome costs entailed in pursuing long-stalelated conflicts have led to positive developments in a number of regional disputes. Agreements and understandings have been concluded and in some cases implemented, and mechanisms have been established to facilitate conciliation and to enhance support for international law. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is therefore encouraged to conclude that we are entering a period in international relations that is replete with opportunities which, if approached cautiously and with a clear

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understanding of the many complex factors involved, may be exploited to the benefit of all.

The example of Namibia comes readily to mind here. I wish to express my Government's appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his staff to implement the agreed United Nations plan to bring independence to Namibia. We wish, however, to express our deep concern over the blatant attempts by the apartheid régime, through its Administrator-General, to frustrate the electoral process set out in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) by intimidation and by distortion of the registration process. South Africa must not obtain by devious means what it could not achieve by naked force. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is therefore of the view that greater vigilance must be exercised by both the supervising authorities and the international community. The implementation of the United Nations plan to bring independence to Namibia must not be disrupted by the duplicity, delaying tactics and intimidation of the apartheid régime.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has demonstrated recently its commitment to the emergence of an independent Namibia by acceding to a request from the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the provision of a group of suitably qualified persons to assist in preparations for the forthcoming general elections in that country. My Government stands ready to render such further assistance as may be feasible to facilitate the successful completion of the independence process in Namibia.

Despite the progress in Namibia, apartheid still exists in neighbouring South Africa. We are of the view that the recent changing of the guard in the apartheid régime could create, with enlightened self-interest and political courage, a window of opportunity in the embattled apartheid laager. However, this will not be

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achieved by the sop of "evolutionary change" advocated by the new leader of the minority régime who, despite conflicting signals, does not promise to yield power to the majority. Bold and courageous steps are now required to satisfy the deep-seated aspirations of the majority of the people of South Africa. These will include the lifting of the state of emergency and the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners from a futile, inhumane and counter-productive incarceration. These steps would facilitate the commencement of a genuine dialogue with the leaders of the majority with a view to bringing about meaningful change leading to the emergence of a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa.

Trinidad and Tobago remains firm, steadfast and unrelenting in its total denunciation of apartheid and reiterates its complete support for the people of South Africa in their struggle to eradicate this vicious scourge. As long as the system of apartheid is practised in South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago will continue to prohibit economic, cultural, sporting and other links with that country.

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My Government is conscious that individual action will not by itself suffice to dismantle the system of apartheid. Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago once more appeals to those States which wield influence on the leadership of the South African régime to support all international measures aimed at ending this heinous and odious system, including the imposition of comprehensive, mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Such concerted and resolute action, we are convinced, is the only way forward.

Trinidad and Tobago also welcomes the decision taken by the General Assembly to devote a special session in December this year to the issue of apartheid. The need for such a session has been made even more urgent by the most recent events in South Africa, especially the wanton murder of 22 unarmed black people shot in a so-called crackdown on anti-apartheid dissent and the staging of manifestly unrepresentative elections on 6 September, which again excluded the African majority. The continued existence of apartheid remains a source of profound outrage to Trinidad and Tobago and, as representatives will agree, to the international community.

It is unfortunate that in the Middle East some of the opportunities created by the thaw in super-Power relations are being allowed to slip away. Inertia and the obstinate yearning for unrealistic goals are snuffing out the faint hopes which had begun to stir a year ago with the momentum generated by the decisions of the Palestine National Council and the commencement of a dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the United States of America. All the peace initiatives undertaken have been aborted, while the blood-letting and repression continue in the occupied territories. My Government remains convinced that the convening of an international peace conference is still the best means of achieving

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peace, based on respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for the right of all parties concerned to exist in peace and security.

Tragically, in Lebanon the situation is worsening and the agony of the Lebanese people continues. The international community looks on despairingly as the long-suffering Lebanese communities are further decimated by indiscriminate artillery barrages. My Government joins others in calling on the parties to the Lebanese conflict to end this senseless terror. All countries in a position to influence that situation should and must redouble their efforts to bring those disputes to peaceful resolution. In this context, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the recent initiative of the Arab League to bring about a cease-fire.

Recent developments in other parts of the world serve to further reinforce the urgent need for political solutions through negotiations involving all the parties concerned. In Afghanistan the withdrawal of foreign troops has been followed by an escalation in the fighting. This has complicated, as representatives will appreciate, the search for a peaceful resolution of the dispute.

With regard to Kampuchea the unmonitored withdrawal of foreign troops has been followed by the threat of an escalation in the fighting. This aggravates the sense of disquiet which resulted from the inconclusive Paris Conference. My Government hopes that the Co-Chairmen of the Paris Conference will be successful in having the diplomatic process resumed. We are also heartened by the Secretary-General's intention to continue exercising his good offices to bring an end to this impasse.

In the Korean peninsula, my Government hopes that the dialogue between the two Koreas will continue. Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the early entry of the Koreas as full Members of the United Nations, in keeping with the principle of universality of membership, which we fully support.

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The relaxation of international tensions and the increased recourse to multilateral processes have facilitated a growing use of regional initiatives to resolve regional disputes. It is in that context of multilateral participation that Trinidad and Tobago, a small State, has been called upon to play an active role in regional attempts to further peace and stability in our own region. Along with Ecuador and Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago has been a member of the Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS) to Panama. That Mission has sought, in consultation with the Government and people of Panama, to assist in resolving the political crisis in that country by developing options and mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of a democratically elected government.

My Government warmly welcomes the initiatives being taken to bring true and lasting peace to Central America. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The processes and procedures outlined by the Contadora Group and the more recent Esquipulas II and Tela agreements point the way forward to national reconciliation and the restoration of social and political stability in the region. The crucial aspect of this process will be the forthcoming general elections in Nicaragua, which must be free and fair. In this regard also, my Government was honoured by the invitation of the Secretary-General of the OAS to send officials to observe the registration of voters, a request to which we have readily responded.

As Members know, Haiti enjoys a special place in Caribbean history and consciousness as the first independent nation in our region. As a result of its history and language, the natural links between the English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti have not yet been fully developed. Nevertheless, we in the Caribbean Community have keenly felt Haiti's pain. Consequently, at the invitation of the Government of Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago have once again participated in a

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fact-finding mission mounted by the Caribbean Community to that country. The recent announcement of an electoral timetable raises our hopes that the Government and people of Haiti will move unchecked towards the establishment of a free and democratic society. In this context, it becomes even more urgent for the international community to provide the necessary assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Haitian people.

The point has been made in the past from this rostrum and in many other international forums that the degree of confidence placed in multilateral processes is most often in inverse proportion to the size of the State. Like many other small States in the international community, Trinidad and Tobago views the United Nations as one of the guarantors of its sovereignty and independence and as the most effective and capable mechanism for promoting peace and security among Member States. Regional bodies such as the OAS and the Caribbean Community play a similarly important role.

Trinidad and Tobago also strongly holds the view that small States, normally without significant political, economic and military influence, must endeavour by their conduct to be a moral force, to serve in some sense as the conscience of the international community. Indeed, my Government has noted with keen interest that over the past year several small States have been able to make a tangible contribution to the preservation of international peace and security. As mentioned earlier, Trinidad and Tobago, a member of the Caribbean Community, has been asked to play such a role, as evidenced by our involvement in Panama, Nicaragua, Namibia and Haiti. It is to be hoped that this positive trend will continue for small States, and particularly when acting in concert, do have a worthwhile contribution to make in this area, not only by their example, but also as honest brokers.

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Today, as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, there is as yet no prospect of a new equilibrium in international economic relations that would facilitate the emergence of a community of interests and of shared concerns and responsibilities. The critical economic situation of most developing countries worsens as the inequities in the global distribution of wealth grow sharper and even more pronounced. Prices of primary commodities continue to fluctuate at disastrously low levels; the terms of trade of developing countries as a whole have deteriorated; and heavy external debt severely hampers development initiatives. For many of us the momentum of development that was gained in the 1960s and the 1970s has been lost. Indeed, the 1980s have come to be termed the lost decade of development.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, per-capita income for the region as a whole now remains below the level of 1980. Trinidad and Tobago, confronted by handicaps arising from the interplay of the specific problems of small-island developing countries and the problems facing the developing world in general, experienced its sixth consecutive year of negative growth in 1988. The majority of developing countries in other regions also experienced declining per-capita output.

Is it not ironic that negative growth in the developing world has been accompanied by an economic upswing in the developed countries, which entered a record-breaking seventh year of growth in 1988? Indeed, all developed market economies have experienced more rapid growth than was expected. Despite these favourable trends in the developed world, the multilateral trading system has been subjected to considerable strain, and barriers to trade have continued to proliferate, in spite of the pious commitments made at Punta del Este. The Uruguay Round presents the international community with an opportunity to repair and

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strengthen the international trading system, to ensure that trade is kept free of impediments and that countries avoid recourse to protectionist devices. These devices, I should add, are particularly harmful to enterprises and countries of the South.

It is for that reason that developing countries have stressed that the Uruguay Round must deal with issues of traditional concern, particularly those, such as the questionable use of safeguards and non-tariff barriers, that relate to the restriction of access to markets. Substantial progress must be achieved in these areas before attention is directed to the so-called new issues. It is our hope that the future negotiations will be more transparent and imbued with a spirit of co-operation and compromise that will cater equitably for the interests of both the industrialized and the developing countries.

For many developing countries the problems of external debt and debt-servicing remain the major impediment to long-term growth and sustainable development. Unchecked, the continued ravages of this crisis would relegate many countries to a future of hopeless penury.

There is emerging within the international community an awareness that the problem of external debt must be urgently addressed. This awareness, however, has not yet been translated into consensus for a comprehensive solution that will command the support of all the parties involved. It is our view that debt strategies employed thus far have been too selective in their scope and application and have focused little attention on small, middle-income countries, like Trinidad and Tobago. I can assure the Assembly that we too feel, in equal measure, the pain inflicted by external debt, debt-servicing and structural adjustment.

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The need for a solution to the problem of external debt is critical for yet another reason. The massive external debt and the cost of servicing it, aggravated at times by volatile interest rates, have created a perverse situation where there is a net transfer of resources to the industrialized countries of the world. In Latin America and the Caribbean this reverse flow has been particularly burdensome. The United Nations itself has estimated that since 1983 the region has been transferring abroad annually nearly one fifth of its export earnings or gross domestic product.

This outflow is taking place simultaneously with the stagnation of concessional resources, the global decrease in the flow of foreign direct investment to developing countries, and the virtual cessation of lending to developing countries by the commercial-banking sector. In these circumstances there must be serious economic distortion.

The international community must address this problem urgently. Any strategy for the developing countries, in the next decade and beyond, must be based on the premise of access to adequate financial resources. Such strategies must, as a matter of priority, redirect resources and surplus savings in the world economy towards the developing countries, where there exists a vast need for investment flows to foster growth and sustainable development.

The interrelated nature of the problems faced by all countries indicates that international co-operation is crucial to their resolution. In this context the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions in the international economy is vital. The IMF and the World Bank must direct their efforts, resources and influence towards the evolution of a more equitable world economy and towards the cause of growth and sustainable development in the developing countries.

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Several major economic conferences during the course of this year have again affirmed the necessity for countries of the North and of the South to engage in a broad-based dialogue on issues that affect their relations. Trinidad and Tobago therefore welcomes the decision to convene, in 1990, a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and, in particular, to the revitalization of the process of economic growth and development in the developing countries. This special session will present a timely opportunity to arrive at political decisions aimed at achieving effective collective action in the interrelated areas of money, finance, trade, external debt and development. It is our fervent hope that the special session will facilitate the preparation and adoption of a widely agreed international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade.

The rapid advances in science and technology, and their immediate application to all spheres of activity, are having a profound impact on the social and economic evolution of all societies. It is therefore especially unfortunate that one of the results of the economic regression that has afflicted developing countries in the 1980s is the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries in the acquisition and utilization of technology. The simple truth is that technology is critical to growth and development. There is therefore an urgent need to devise appropriate mechanisms to increase the transfer of technology to developing countries, to strengthen their indigenous capabilities in science and technology, and to do so on terms and conditions to which the developing countries can readily subscribe.

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It is for that reason that Trinidad and Tobago is disappointed with the slow rate of progress in the effort to elaborate and conclude the international code of conduct on the transfer of technology. This code will address the rights, responsibilities and obligations of its signatories and provide a framework within which technological exchanges can take place for the benefit of both the provider and the recipient. I therefore urge all involved in the negotiations to let their deliberations be guided not by narrow self-interest, but by a vision of the larger benefits that will accrue to all parties as a result of the completion and implementation of the code.

Protection of the environment is another area where the destinies of the developed and developing nations are closely intertwined. Desertification, soil erosion and deforestation combine with the emission of pollutants into the atmosphere and effluents into the water systems to destroy the ecosystems of our planet. Sadly, attempts to dump toxic waste from developed to developing countries have added a disturbing dimension to environmental degradation.

Environmental problems do not respect national boundaries. Consequently, individual country programmes for the most part will do very little to solve these problems. The need therefore is for concerted, regional and international approaches to combat this crisis. We in the Caribbean have recognized this and Caribbean Ministers of Environment met earlier this year and agreed upon the Port-of-Spain Accord, which maps out a co-ordinated programme for the preservation of our environment. For us in the Caribbean, the preservation of the environment is especially important since it forms the cradle of our tourist industry, the dynamic sector in the economic life of many of our countries. It is against this background that Trinidad and Tobago supports the convening of the proposed United Nations conference on environment and development, to take place no later than 1992.

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The recent passage of hurricane Hugo has again demonstrated the vulnerability of the Caribbean islands to natural disasters. We extend our sympathy to those who were affected by the hurricane as it wove its way through the islands of the Caribbean to the eastern seaboard of the United States of America. The task of rebuilding will be formidable. Caribbean States responded immediately, providing assistance within the limits of their capabilities. Trinidad and Tobago today urges the international community to assist generously in this process of reconstruction.

It is evident from the way in which the international economic system is being reshaped as the twentieth century draws to a close that the survival of small island developing countries will become increasingly precarious unless they too can group themselves into stronger economic units.

The advent of a single European market in 1992 and the recently introduced Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States will have a very significant effect on Trinidad and Tobago and on its neighbours in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), for these countries are our biggest trading partners. It was with this in mind, and in anticipation of other similar changes in the global economy, that the Heads of CARICOM Governments, at their 10th meeting last July, in Grenada, adopted the Grand Anse Declaration and Work Programme for the Advancement of the Integration Movement. The Declaration contains a range of specific and far-reaching initiatives which are to be implemented over the next four years and which will serve to accelerate the integration process and strengthen all dimensions of the Community.

We in Trinidad and Tobago have always recognized that our destiny is inextricably linked to that of our sister States in the Caribbean. Our own efforts at integration pre-date our independence, and over the last 20 years we have

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gradually but steadily worked towards deepening our integration movement and making our Community and common market a reality. It will readily be appreciated that the process of Caribbean integration has not been easy, given the lack of complementarity of our economies. Nevertheless, the member States of CARICOM are demonstrating the necessary political will, determination and realism needed to achieve it.

The use of, and traffic in, illegal drugs has emerged as a major problem affecting the international community. This plague corrodes the very fabric of our societies. It has the potential to frustrate, subvert and in some cases render impotent the actions of elected Governments. Recent developments in Latin America have demonstrated, under the horrified gaze of the entire world community, the tremendous threat posed by those individuals and entities who deal in degradation and death represented by illegal drugs.

The Secretary-General has pointed out in his annual report that the monetary value of drug trafficking has recently surpassed that of the international trade in oil and is now second only to the arms trade. It is a searing commentary on contemporary international priorities that while many countries struggle with malnutrition, disease and a host of economic and social problems, the trade in illegal drugs and arms stands at the pinnacle of international commerce.

The Caribbean, positioned as we are and lacking the human and material resources to interdict drug traffickers, has become a natural pathway for illegal drugs bound for the lucrative markets of North America and Europe. Caribbean governments are thus faced with a unique challenge, more so since they are unable to match financial and other resources with the powerful drug cartels.

For Trinidad and Tobago, and for all of us in the Caribbean, international co-operation is the only viable option. For this reason, my country supports the

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convening of a special session of the General Assembly to deal with the issue of illicit drug trafficking. The international community must declare war on this illicit trade. The battle, however, cannot be fought only in the fields of Latin America or on the shores of the Caribbean islands. The battle must also be waged with vigour and determination on the streets of the consumer nations.

International co-operation therefore should focus not only on interdiction but also on demand reduction. It must also place greater emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation for those unfortunate members of our societies who have fallen victim to the lure of illicit drugs.

After careful consideration, we in the Caribbean have placed proposals before the Assembly on the question of the international trade in illegal drugs. Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, has proposed the establishment of a United Nations multilateral, multisectoral force which would provide assistance to States, on their request, in the areas of intelligence and interdiction. We commend this proposal to the General Assembly for favourable consideration during this session.

For our part, on the basis of a proposal by Mr. A. N. R. Robinson, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, my delegation has introduced a new item to the agenda of the General Assembly. The item calls for the establishment of an international criminal court which would be a judicial institution operating with the agreement of States in the international community and which would adjudicate on the criminal responsibility of the individuals who contravene international law. The jurisdiction of such a court would be limited to those crimes that may be defined as international crimes on the basis of identified principles of international law.

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The international traffic in illegal drugs has joined genocide, war crimes and acts of terrorism as offences that affect the entire international community and the peaceful conduct of international relations. Regrettably, domestic legal systems are often overburdened or, in some cases, inadequate to deal with the perpetrators of such offences. While it is true that modern technology and the communications revolution make the control of international crime possible, it has become palpably clear that no State acting on its own can successfully defeat international criminals.

Trinidad and Tobago is a party to the non-aligned initiative for the 1990s to be declared the decade of international law. We believe that the establishment of an international criminal court would constitute an important impetus to the codification and progressive development of international law during the decade. Trinidad and Tobago's proposal has been introduced in the Sixth Committee at this session of the Assembly, and we hope that it will receive the full support of Member States.

Forty-four years ago the founders of this Organization, representing the collective conscience of peoples that had emerged battered and exhausted from the Second World War, saw the United Nations as the only hope to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Since that time we have made significant strides. But in some areas we have fallen short.

Recent events seem to indicate, however, that the international community may be entering a new and more peaceful era. If this promise of peace is to be realized, then Member States will have to give even greater support to the United Nations, particularly as its role in the resolution of conflicts and peace-keeping

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increases. For it is only in such an environment that all countries can pursue and implement programmes and policies leading to their full growth and development.

It is therefore incumbent on us all to display the political will, the imagination and the compassion necessary to transmute opportunity into reality. Together we can then fashion a future which will guarantee the dignity and worth of the human person and provide a solid foundation for a new architecture of the world.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.