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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 23 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. GARBA

(Nigeria)

later:

Mr. AL-ANBARI
(Vice-President)

(Iraq)

- Development and international economic co-operation [82]
 - (f) Environment: report of the Secretary-General
- Organization of work
- Development and international economic co-operation [82] (continued)
 - (f) Environment: report of the Secretary-General

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

- (f) ENVIRONMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)

The PRESIDENT: As members will recall, at its 3rd plenary meeting the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the General Committee, that, prior to consideration of sub-item (f) of item 82 by the Second Committee, the debate on the proposed 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development would be held directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that action on this aspect of the sub-item would be taken by the Second Committee.

(The President)

I propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this sub-item be closed today at 5 p.m.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate to put their names on the list as soon as possible.

Ms. DARL (Sweden): I should like first to express my satisfaction and that of my Government that the General Assembly is paying due respect to the important item on the environment by having this debate on the convening and outcome of the 1992 conference on environment and development in the plenary meeting.

In this important debate I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

In September 1987 the Swedish Government proposed that a United Nations conference on environment and development be convened in 1992 - 20 years after the Stockholm Conference. That initiative was part of the implementation of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. The report indicated, in April 1987, that an international conference could be convened to maintain human progress within the guidelines of human needs and natural laws. It is now time to take the necessary decisions.

The preparations for the conference should be guided by the conviction that human needs should be satisfied without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs.

Placing environmental problems in a broad economic and social development context, the conference must demonstrate how the environment and natural resources are to be safeguarded for the future of mankind. We trust that the conference

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will give the necessary political impetus and translate sustainable and environmentally sound development into a number of legally binding international agreements and concrete action plans. Concrete targets and goals for the world community should be agreed upon. In order to be truly effective the action plans should address the economic and social sources of environmental problems.

It is our hope that the discussions will focus on the desirable outcome of the conference, which will have to be negotiated carefully during the limited time available. It is our view that the fact that the timetable is limited should be used as an instrument to put the necessary pressure on Governments and other institutions that need to come together to ensure meaningful commitments.

Our point of departure should be the major environmental issues as identified by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at its fifteenth session and how to deal with these within the general economic and social development process in all countries.

The first issue is the protection of the atmosphere. Global warming is one of the gravest global environmental dangers so far identified. The most immediate measure is to phase out completely the use of currently controlled chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons and other ozone-depleting substances at the latest by the year 2000, in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration of 1989, which was agreed upon by 81 countries. This requires that the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer be made more stringent in 1990. Simultaneously, adherence to the Protocol must be widened. The transfer of technology and financial resources to developing countries will be a necessary step for this purpose.

The basis for further action on climate change is to be provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which will adopt its interim report in August 1990 at a meeting in Sweden. To regulate the intergovernmental efforts a

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framework convention is urgently needed. It should contain well-defined goals. By 1992 decisions in a legally binding form will also have to be taken on concrete measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases other than CFCs and to control other sources of global warming. The most important of such measures is the reduction of emissions of carbon dioxide in industrialized countries. Such reductions will be possible only with substantial changes in our energy and transport policies and practices.

Many developing countries might be particularly badly hit by global warming while having considerable difficulties in carrying out the internationally required measures. These countries should be assisted through the transfer of technology and financial resources.

Transboundary air pollution, particularly acid rain, is afflicting the European and North American continents, with grave damage to human health, forests, crops, lakes, buildings and cultural monuments. The regional action taken needs to be further strengthened and developed. Information is now emerging on similar dangers in other regions of the world. The 1992 conference should take a global perspective and set the necessary action in motion.

Turning from the atmosphere to fresh-water resources, we approach a problem which gradually but steadily becomes more critically important: The competition for water in arid parts of the world is already, and will be increasingly, harsh. Environmental degradation of fresh-water resources is a world-wide phenomenon. The 1992 conference should agree on new and innovative policies on fresh-water resources, including further subregional conventions on co-operation. Another component should be changes in agricultural and industrial policies and practices to limit pollution of fresh-water resources. The provision of assistance to the poorest in developing countries in gaining access to healthy water remains a crucial and still unsolved problem.

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Despite admirable efforts through UNEP's regional seas programme, the situation of sensitive coastal areas is still not satisfactory, and the 1992 conference must devise further action. Developing countries need assistance in developing and managing their coastal resources. The environmental situation of the high seas was for some years thought to be satisfactory. Latest indications show, however, that a potentially dangerous degradation is taking place, mainly as a result of airborne pollutants. The 1992 conference should confront this situation.

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Deforestation and desertification are among the worst of the environmental threats. Action taken so far has been grossly inadequate. The 1992 conference must demonstrate how the most affected countries and the international donor community can co-operate to reverse the trend. The question of regional action should be addressed, particularly with regard to deforestation in certain subregions which influence precipitation patterns over large areas. An increasing number of countries are in the process of degrading and depleting their soils by erosion, inappropriate farming practices and overproduction of export crops.

The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development underlines the economic value of biological diversity and both the potentials and the risks of biotechnology. The Governing Council of UNEP has decided that an international legal instrument should be prepared on the biological diversity of the planet. The decision brings up the economic dimension. It includes the question of adequate machinery for financial transfers from those who benefit from the exploitation of biological diversity to the owners and managers of biological resources. This legal instrument should be ready for signature at the 1992 conference.

Although the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal has been adopted, much greater effort will be needed before production and transboundary movements of hazardous wastes are reduced to a minimum. Developing countries need assistance in order to cope with the problem. Undoubtedly the 1992 conference must confront the issue. The same is true with regard to environmentally safe management of chemicals. To cope with the risks of highly chemicalized societies, innovative strategies need to be agreed upon such as replacement of highly hazardous chemicals by less dangerous substitutes. The Governing Council decided to amend the London Guidelines for the

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Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade, setting in motion certain procedures for prior consent which will particularly benefit developing countries. By 1992 these procedures should be evaluated and, possibly, steps taken to transform the London Guidelines into a convention.

The Governing Council of UNEP identified one further major environmental issue, namely, protection of human health conditions and quality of life from degradation of the environment. This degradation affects the everyday life of the millions of working people in developing countries. Poverty, environmental degradation and unchecked population growth reinforce each other. The issue is also intimately connected with industrial, human-settlement and health policies, and indeed with economic development policies in general.

Clear action-oriented conclusions can be drawn from this short review of the major environmental issues.

First, environmental issues must be integrated with general economic and sectoral policies and can be solved only through transformation of these policies. This is in line with one of the major findings of the World Commission on Environment and Development, namely, that preventive and precautionary action at source is the only long-term remedy for problems of environment and development.

Secondly, for nearly all these problems the situation of the developing countries deserves particular attention. The solution of most of them requires arrangements for assistance to these countries and especially to the poorer among them.

Thirdly, although work is in progress on most of these issues, new and intensified efforts are needed. The issues lend themselves well to concrete decision-making at the 1992 conference, including legally binding agreements in some cases and concrete action plans to address all the aforementioned major issues.

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Fourthly, the concrete decisions to be adopted by the conference on these major environmental issues need to be carefully prepared. Intergovernmental groups are already dealing with some of these issues and more such groups might be set up, mainly within the framework of UNEP and with the assistance of other organs and organizations within the United Nations system. Within a co-ordinated preparatory process, such groups could, at the request of the preparatory committee, be asked to prepare decisions for the 1992 conference.

The 1992 conference should also deal with sectoral policies and adopt concrete action plans for sectors of strategic importance. This approach is necessary in order to secure full and integrated treatment of the whole range of environment and development problems.

Transportation structures constitute a rapidly increasing threat to the environment. In many countries an increasing part of the emission of carbon dioxide comes from motor vehicles. Motor vehicles are also responsible for other emissions dangerous to land, water and vegetation as well as to the health of people, especially in large urban concentrations. New structures and new technologies need to be developed, including something approaching a "clean" engine. Governments must agree on strict standards and requirements. Ministers of transport and environment in the countries members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) should initiate this work at their forthcoming meeting in Paris in November. We note with interest the requirements of this type being established in parts of the United States.

Environmental degradation stemming from the transport sector is closely related to environmental degradation from energy structures as a whole. In addition to acidification, the grave danger to our climate from the use of fossil fuels is now an established fact. Other energy sources also carry environmental

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risks, although to a varying extent. Such risks have, for example, been an important factor behind the decision in four of the five countries for which I am speaking today not to build nuclear power plants, or to phase out - as we are doing in Sweden - their nuclear programme. A twofold policy is necessary: increased energy efficiency and a switch to renewable and environmentally sound energy sources. Pricing policies will have to play an important role in this context. Special account has to be taken of the need of developing countries, in particular the poorer among them, for energy at reasonable cost.

The United Nations system needs to pay greater attention to global transport and energy policies, although certain parts of such policies are dealt with in a number of United Nations organs. Sustainable and environmentally sound transport and energy policies will be key issues for the success of the 1992 conference.

Another essential sector for development and environment is agriculture and forestry. This sector is also intimately linked with two other major environmental issues - desertification and deforestation.

The industrial sector is also a major source of environmental degradation. Certain progress has been made on the emissions from stationary installations. Diffused emissions from the use and final disposal of products of industry are, on the other hand, increasing in importance. The positive response of relevant United Nations organs to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development is something to build upon in the preparation of relevant action programmes on industry to be adopted by the 1992 conference.

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The development, assessment and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies are closely related to industry. New low- and non-waste technologies have great potential.

The social and human dimensions of the environment cannot be over-emphasized. Population, environment, natural resources and development are closely interrelated. Population policies must have a broader focus than birth control; the objective must be to expand the carrying capacity of the environment, to improve health and sanitation, and to develop human resources through education and training.

There are a number of linkages between environmental policies and the policies in important fields which it is also essential to address in 1992. Besides environment and economics, and others I have mentioned, I wish to refer to environment and employment; environment and health; environmental ethics, awareness, education and participation; environment and security; and, finally, environmental emergencies and catastrophes.

The World Commission on Environment and Development has demonstrated that poverty might be the worst threat to the environment, because poor people and poor nations might be forced to carry out excessive exploitation of their environment and natural resources. At the same time, the life styles and production and consumption patterns of a minority of rich industrialized countries indeed constitute a threat to our life-sustaining systems. Equity, therefore, is a key word for environmental progress.

Industrialized nations must demonstrate effectively their determination to reduce the burden on the environment caused by their production and consumption patterns. They must also demonstrate their willingness to provide developing

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countries with the additional resources required to make it possible for those countries to choose, in accordance with their own priorities and plans, sustainable and environmentally sound development patterns. The deplorably low volume of international development assistance must be increased. Transfer of environmentally sound technologies should be accelerated. Investment flows for this purpose should be encouraged. We also have to analyse carefully the environmental consequences of all technical transfers to developing countries. Adverse environmental impact must be addressed within the framework of the dialogue on development co-operation and private investment.

The 1992 conference should define the financial requirements for the implementation of its decisions and recommendations. It should also, as proposed by the Governing Council of UNEP, identify the sources of the additional resources required and agree on specific commitments and burden sharing between donor countries in this regard. The industrialized countries must also agree to negotiate with the developing countries measures to achieve such economic relations as would result in sustained and environmentally sound economic growth.

The United Nations organs dealing with development and economic relations must take it upon themselves to prepare for the conference appropriate decisions on these issues.

Agreement on measures to promote international co-operation in research on and development of environmentally sound technology, and the transfer of such technology, is another important prerequisite for a successful conference.

Major environmental issues, linkages between environment and social and economic sectors, transfer of resources and technology, and supportive economic relations are clearly on the agenda of the 1992 conference. But one other issue

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remains, namely, institutional solutions. The Nordic countries fully support the recommendation by the Governing Council of UNEP that the conference should

"Promote the development or strengthening of appropriate institutions at the national, regional and global level to address environmental matters in the context of economic and social development processes." (A/44/25, p. 118)

The issue of how to organize, in particular within the United Nations system, future international co-operation on the environment in a development perspective as well as in addressing major environmental threats will clearly be a part of the deliberations up to the 1992 conference. The role of UNEP should be strengthened. Ways and means to improve the functioning of the whole United Nations system in the field of the environment should at the same time be studied.

The 1992 conference should be action-oriented and directed towards national measures as well as international agreements, far-reaching action plans and well developed institutional and financial arrangements. Accordingly, the preparations will be characterized by negotiations between as many Governments as possible to prepare thoroughly the decisions to be taken at the conference itself.

The preparatory process, in effect, has already started, for example, as regards climate change, biological diversity, sustainable agriculture, sustainable industrial development, and environment and employment. Many of the activities of the United Nations system on environment and development, reinforced by the process for following up the report of the World Commission, have clear relevance for the preparations of the 1992 conference. The possibilities should be investigated of setting up ad hoc bodies under the joint auspices of appropriate United Nations organs, among which UNEP is essential, and also with the participation of selected non-United-Nations institutions. These bodies would prepare parts of the decisions to be taken at the 1992 conference.

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Regional conferences on environment and development constitute another important part of the preparatory process. One has already been held in Kampala, Uganda, for the African region, and others are planned for 1990 in Norway and Malaysia. We understand that a similar conference for the Latin American and Caribbean region will probably take place in the fall of 1990.

The Bergen Conference in Norway is entitled "Action for a Common Future", and we hope that this action-orientation will characterize all the regional conferences and thereby ensure valuable inputs to the preparatory process for the 1992 conference. In our view, the Bergen Conference will be an important test of the industrialized countries' commitment to sustainable development both at home and internationally. They account for the bulk of the world's accumulated pollution and resource depletion and should demonstrate in Bergen their strong political commitment and readiness to set new national and regional targets for concrete action to combat national, regional and global environmental problems. The Danish Government will host a seminar for member countries of the European Community and the European Free Trade Association in November of this year, focusing on the economic policies in Western Europe and its impact on the environment.

The main responsibility for the negotiating process leading up to the 1992 conference must obviously rest with the preparatory committee for the conference. This does not mean that the committee itself will carry out all negotiations. On the contrary, as I have already suggested, ongoing processes should be utilized and new negotiations in ad hoc bodies should be initiated. The preparatory committee must consist of all Members of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. It should meet at least four times before the conference. Its officers should carry out its important functions between meetings of the committee itself.

(Ms. Dahl, Sweden)

The preparatory committee should be serviced by an efficient and fairly large secretariat, headed by highly competent persons, to be appointed by the Secretary-General. In order to make efficient use of the resources of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the secretariat should be located in proximity to most of these organs. The offer of the Government of Switzerland to support financially a location in Geneva is most welcome.

The venue for the conference should be decided by the General Assembly this year. We are pleased to support the generous offer of the Government of Brazil to host the conference.

The issues of environment and development represent a major challenge of our time. The Nordic countries trust that the process leading up to the 1992 conference will provide a historic momentum, enabling the United Nations system to live up to its full potential in saving "our only one earth".

Mr. LALONDE (France) (interpretation from French): I am pleased to address the Assembly today on behalf of the European Community and its member States on preparations for the United Nations conference on environment and development, to be held in 1992. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your responsible post, and express our gratification at the priority being given to the item on the environment. I note what has been done since the beginning of our adventure into outer space, which has shown our planet to be smaller and more fragile than we thought it was, completely isolated and unique. And ever since we saw those photographs of the blue planet we have felt that we are all prisoners, side by side on the planet.

I should like to assure the Assembly that the States of the European Community are resolved to act, and I am very gratified to note today that environmental protection is in the forefront of everyone's priorities. The entire international community is now unanimous on the subject. Local, regional and world problems are all involved; no one can question that. Nor can anyone question that environmental concerns should be included in all policies - agricultural, industrial, transportation, energy and land-use planning. Ecology requires an overall view, common solutions and genuine solidarity. Nor can anyone question the link between the environment and development.

How can we continue a policy of economic development without causing harm to the non-renewable resources on Earth and thereby threatening the future of mankind? At the same time, how can we conceive of a future without development for the least developed countries? Environment and development are inextricably linked. We have to combine our efforts in order to promote economic and social development compatible with environmental protection.

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Furthermore, the right to a high-quality environment is becoming, both in fact and in written texts, one of the fundamental requirements of our societies. We find the burden and content of the numerous initiatives taken and statements made this year by politicians at the highest level very heartening in this connection.

The seven-Power summit conference gave pride of place to the environment for the first time, emphasizing that it must be made an integral part of the management of resources and economic development. The Seven particularly stressed problems connected with climatic changes and the depletion of the ozone layer. The protection of the atmosphere urgently requires increased international co-operation, intensification of research programmes and encouragement of the transfer of appropriate resources and technology.

It is significant in this connection that the non-aligned countries at their meeting in Belgrade and the Group of 77 at their ministerial conference stressed the same concerns and the determination of Governments to face up to new world challenges. While events have brought out the global dimension of environmental problems, specific solutions should also be sought at the regional level; the European Economic Community is particularly well placed to bear witness to that. For more than 15 years now it has been developing a programme of action on the environment, based on very close regional co-operation and unique of its kind. This policy has been reinforced by the Single European Act, which made it one of the components of Community policy.

The European Community has a policy of opening to the rest of the world. It intends particularly to continue to develop its co-operative relations with the developing countries in order to help them set up development programmes which will increasingly include the environmental aspect. That is one of the purposes of our programme, launched in June 1989, to study the greenhouse effect. It was also the purpose of the conclusion reached on 19 September by the Council of Ministers at

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their last meeting, to provide assistance to countries with forest areas in maintaining a better balance between the exploitation and the regeneration of forests.

It is clear that, like the protection of the atmosphere, the maintenance of the ecological diversity of plants and animal species is a matter of great concern to us. In this connection, we welcome the decision taken by the United Nations Environment Programme to start negotiations on a model convention on this subject. At the recent meeting of the parties to the convention in Washington, we took the initiative of proposing the prohibition of the ivory trade. I welcome that decision and hope it will contribute to saving the last remaining specimens of the species.

In regard to Community aid to the 70 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the ongoing negotiations for the forthcoming agreement on co-operation - Lomé IV - with those countries give an important place to the environment. Provisions concerning tropical forests and hazardous wastes will be adopted at those negotiations. In this connection, because of the scandalous trade in hazardous wastes - revealed last year - the Community in 1989 signed the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes. It had already been applying these principles by strictly monitoring the transfer of hazardous wastes between countries and the transparency of the operations.

Still on the subject of Europe, but in the context of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, other work is under way on long-distance atmospheric pollution, water pollution, and the transportation of hazardous substances. Finally, it should be pointed out that for the first time a meeting precisely on environmental matters is being held at present in Bulgaria as part of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

(Mr. Lalonde, France)

The prospect of a conference in 1992 on environment and development provides us with a matchless opportunity to continue to reinforce our co-operation and prove our solidarity in environmental matters. The United Nations Environment Programme has already done very important work in launching preparations for the conference by its decision 15/3, which we fully support. These are the underpinnings for our negotiations at this session of the General Assembly regarding preparations for the conference. While we acknowledge the links between environmental matters and development, we subscribe to the topics that have been chosen, even if other topics are equally relevant today. I am thinking, for example, of the major natural and technological risks entailed in the gravest problems faced by States, and here I pay tribute to the recent victims of earthquakes in China and San Francisco. We particularly stress the importance of prevention in this area, where international co-operation is fully warranted.

Twenty years after Stockholm we have to take honest stock of what has been done. It is therefore important to contemplate the forthcoming conference in 1992 in a pragmatic and realistic spirit. What should be the real, the major points at issue? Of course, the ideal plan would be first and foremost to make a general survey of the soundness of the Earth's environment, and then to propose innovative solutions to cope with world problems, while not disregarding specific features.

(Mr. Lalonde, France)

How can we together define new and more efficacious means of dealing with institutional, financial, juridical and technical matters?

Current thinking, particularly in the field of the prevention of the heating up of the atmosphere, as part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization, particularly by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, should lead us to effective solutions. We welcome what has been done by the various multilateral and bilateral financial organizations: the World Bank, the Committee on Aid for Development and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It is essential that all countries be involved in this process. The industrialized countries have a special role to play in protecting the environment since, essentially, they are responsible for industrial pollution. They have a dual responsibility. First, they are responsible for adopting rigorous internal trend-setting steps on the lines of the commitments made to the progressive elimination of chlorofluorocarbons. They should also promote the transfer of technology and the development of appropriate technology and provide the developing countries with additional resources.

We understand that these countries face particularly difficult situations. We would like particular attention to be devoted to their very specific problems: rural development, desertification, deforestation, accelerated town planning, the handling of wastes, access to water resources and the daily administration of the environment, information and research. We also give our political support to such projects as the establishment of an observatory for the Saharan zones.

We believe that the means thus mobilized would make it easier for the developing countries to participate in international efforts and contribute to financing the specific effort that these countries will have to make. Financial institutions, appropriate multilateral organizations such as the World Bank

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and other United Nations bodies, and scientific and technological organizations should be utilized within the areas of their respective competence. They should mobilize additional resources on the basis of the economic and technical objectives assigned to them. The traditional channels of aid should be used but the possibility of more original and innovative machinery, including paying debts in kind, should be explored when preparing for the conference. I would even note personally that certain countries are proposing even more ambitious systems of direct or indirect taxation. Nothing should be excluded from our thinking.

Financial measures having been considered, the dimensions of the problems which arise in connection with the environment of the planet prompt some enquiry into the ability of existing institutional machinery to cope with the complexity of the decisions called for by rational management of the environment. We are convinced that the United Nations Environment Programme must be strengthened before 1992 to give it the means to implement its policy and enable it to act as a catalyst and co-ordinator within the United Nations system. We welcome the objective of an average increase of 35 per cent a year in the contributions to the Environment Fund, as mentioned in decision 15/1 of the UNEP Governing Council. However, some thought should be given to ensuring that the institutional arrangements in the area of the environment make possible better co-ordination between the competent bodies and more effective decision-making machinery. This, following the London Conference on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, was the conclusion reached at the meeting at The Hague, which called for boldness and imagination.

Meanwhile, these financial and institutional solutions do not excuse the international community from devoting itself to strengthening existing legal instruments or drawing up new texts.

(Mr. Lalonde, France)

In this connection I wish to comment on UNEP Governing Council decision 15/36, on climate, since the process in question is to take place during preparations for the 1992 conference. It seems to us to be a matter of urgency to begin negotiations on the conclusion of a world convention on climate that defines the overall objectives and a plan of action. However, we hope that haste will not prove to the detriment of the substance of this fundamental legal instrument which we believe should contain real commitments for all countries. The instrument should be worked out progressively and in stages, should take into account the particular situations of the various countries and should be in line with the development of scientific knowledge.

In keeping with our participation in the preparation of this convention, we welcome the UNEP decision encouraging the industrialized countries to adopt action-oriented strategies to monitor, stabilize and reduce the emissions of gases producing the greenhouse effect and to develop sources of energy that do not give off such gases. We also welcome the encouragement given to developing countries in that UNEP resolution to adopt similar strategies that take account of their own development level and needs.

In order to define a genuine world strategy, all possibilities must be explored. I am thinking particularly of working out timetables for the successive stages in achieving the objectives and differing deadlines according to the level of development of States. Machinery for researching and monitoring the state of the planet should be the subject of study at the 1992 conference so that it may be refined or improved where necessary.

Regarding preparations for and organization of the conference, the date 1992 is obviously already in our minds. The choice of a period which includes World Environment Day - 5 June 1992 - should be confirmed. Our preference is for an

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intergovernmental preparatory committee established by the Governing Council of UNEP and open to all the States Members of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, as proposed in the Nairobi decision. The universality of this body will guarantee that its decisions reflect the concerns of all the participants. Four meetings of the committee should enable it to identify the needs and draw up the terms of reference of the Conference. This work should also benefit from the contributions of other intergovernmental organizations.

The secretary-general of the conference will be designated by Mr. Perez de Cuellar. We realize that in order to carry out his functions the person chosen will have to combine great political authority with an appropriate knowledge of the discussions going on in international forums on the subject-matter of the conference. A strong secretary-general who gives the public an image of a meeting resolutely turned towards the future will be, to our mind, the guarantee that the conference will be organized in a dynamic way. His secretariat and the headquarters of the preparatory committee should, we believe, be located in Geneva to draw on the experience of the specialized agencies of the United Nations there and of the European Office of the United Nations Environment Programme, in order to promote the widest possible participation at this preparatory stage. We note with interest the facilities proposed for the secretariat by the Swiss Government. In view of the importance of what is at stake at the 1992 conference, we hope that the future secretary-general will as soon as possible lay down guidelines for the contributions that Governments can make to the preparatory work and thus ensure their coherence.

(Mr. Lalonde, France)

We also expect a great deal from the host country, which will also provide the president of the conference. Twenty years after Stockholm, it is desirable that this time our choice should fall on a country from the South. In this connection, I wish to offer the support of the 12 member States of the European Community for Brazil, bearing in mind the requirements that we believe must be met if the conference is to be successful. We believe that with Brazil as president the conference will benefit from the experience of a great country confronted by complex choices but firmly wedded to promotion of the environment and development. We are convinced that Brazil can contribute fundamentally to the search for solutions acceptable to all.

Costs should be defined in realistic and effective terms. A formula should be found to make it possible for the least developed countries to participate. These measures, as well as the functions of the future secretary-general, consistent and sustained preparations in Geneva and the welcome by Brazil will help to ensure the widest possible participation. We hope that in view of the importance of the subject-matter participation in the conference will be at the highest possible level.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the intention of the European Community and its member States to play a most active part in both the preparatory and the final stages of the United Nations conference on environment and development.

Mr. BOUCHARD (Canada) (interpretation from French): I have mixed emotions in addressing the General Assembly today. First, I am proud to come to this rostrum, from which, during 40 years of vital United Nations activity, so many eminent persons have spoken. Secondly, I am sincerely concerned. I am concerned because, no matter how eloquent and moving they are, speeches have little value if they do not result in concrete actions.

In regard to the environment, action must be our unremitting goal. Being aware of the situation, we must immediately change our social, political and economic behaviour.

The environmental issues we face are at once complex and simple. They are complex because of the accommodations they demand: between industrialized and developing countries; between rich and poor; between old and young; between national sovereignty and the interdependence of peoples. They are simple because of the formidable clarity of the choice before us: we can attack the problems and develop economic and social practices in harmony with the environment, or we can leave the problems to our children and hope that they will be able to find solutions and will have enough time to implement them. Thus, as leaders we have the choice of either abdicating or shouldering our responsibilities. That choice must remain uppermost in our mind as we define the objectives and draw up the agenda of the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development.

In Canada's view, the solutions will emerge first and foremost from political will. Unquestionably the challenges before us are great, but we see them as a reason to act rather than not to act.

Canada does not dispute the scientific evidence of global climatic change or other phenomena that undermine the ecosystem. We too are well aware that the

(Mr. Bouchard, Canada)

changes taking place in the air, the water and the soil constitute deterioration and that the causes are mainly man-made.

We believe that the industrialized nations must shoulder their full share of the responsibility. But the developing nations must understand that in their own interests they must decide in favour of sustainable development.

We recognize that issues such as debt, population growth and poverty create enormous environmental pressures on the developing countries. Furthermore, we believe that the gap between rich and poor must be closed. That is as much a moral as an environmental and economic imperative.

(spoke in English)

Many solutions to our environmental problems will be provided through technological innovation. We believe that industrialized nations must, through development assistance programmes and other mechanisms, provide their technological and scientific expertise to the developing world. In this connection Canada would be pleased to see all nations participating in an international environmental industries conference and trade fair, called "Globe '90", in Vancouver next March.

We applaud the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in helping to resolve the many environmental issues facing the world.

We consider the further development of international law to be crucial. Moreover, as leaders recognized at The Hague last March, international institutions must be vested with effective authority to meet the unprecedented challenges facing the global community.

The idea of national sovereignty has evolved over time. We have left behind the international anarchy described by the political theorists. Now, in an era characterized by environmental problems that recognize no boundaries, our concept of sovereignty must continue to evolve and adapt.

(Mr. Bouchard, Canada)

We believe lasting change will be brought about in two ways: first, through vigorous regulations and action by concerned and committed Governments; and, secondly, through the harnessing of economic forces to enable them to contribute to the achievement of environmental goals.

Canada recognizes that change must start at home. No advocate for change should arrive at the door of the 1992 conference with dirty hands. We have begun a process of change with innovative institutions, such as the National Round Table on Environment and Economy and the Winnipeg Centre for the Promotion of Sustainable Development, as well as through changes to our Cabinet decision-making process. In addition, Canada will by next spring present a Government-wide action plan for the implementation of sustainable development at the federal level. Legislation to be introduced shortly will enshrine in law the requirement that environmental considerations be fully taken into account in all projects and initiatives involving the federal Government.

Communications and public awareness are vital to the achievement of lasting environmental change. The news media around the world have a responsibility, indeed an obligation, to grasp what science is telling us and to convey that information to the widest possible audience.

Finally, Canada recognizes the need to use, and commits itself to using, a larger share of its resources to address these problems domestically and internationally. We are prepared to deploy additional resources in concert with others.

(continued in French)

The decade before us will be crucial. As Mr. Mostafa Tolba, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, has indicated, it will be our last chance to take the decisions that will allow us to reconcile the legitimate demands of the developing countries with the essential need to protect the

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environment. The 1992 conference will be a unique opportunity to take a real step forward. It will provide the vital impetus for the activities under way in most countries and in all the international institutions.

We should also expect the preparatory work to establish a framework that will integrate policies and actions in a logical way. It is essential that the proposals and initiatives - which are proliferating in the present climate of great enthusiasm - be organized into a coherent and effective whole.

The origin of this process dates back to 1972, when the nations of the world met in Stockholm for the first international Conference on the Human Environment. The historic Stockholm Declaration set forth the broad principles of a new environmental initiative with a local and transboundary dimension.

On the twentieth anniversary of that Conference, our nations must address a new generation of problems, this time global, and must ensure access by all to sustainable development.

We are not here to make any imputation of failure in this matter. The Stockholm Declaration was eminently suited to its time - 1972. Today, however, the problems are infinitely more global in nature. The vicious circle of poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation must be broken by the integration of environmental protection and economic development into a single initiative. Our present task is to undertake and actually fulfil a universal commitment to sustainable development.

The 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development set the stage for the 1992 conference. In articulating the concept of sustainable development, the Commission changed for ever the way we think about the environment. But two years have passed since the Brundtland report was considered by the Assembly. We must now take the next step and translate sustainable development into a specific programme of action.

(Mr. Bouchard, Canada)

(spoke in English)

We should do that without any illusions. Let there be no mistake: sustainable development is a radical concept, not the status quo in a new package. We are talking about fundamental changes - in the developing world and, even more importantly, in industrialized countries. Sustainable development need not entail large capital outlays. But, as pointed out in the Brundtland report and confirmed in the UNEP definition of sustainable development, it requires a new way of thinking about future development.

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The sustainable development prescription has now been endorsed as a guiding concept by the Assembly and the United Nations system, by the Group of 7 Economic Summit nations, the Commonwealth, the Francophone Summits and many others. Individual Governments at all levels in Canada and elsewhere have adopted it as a fundamental objective.

The 1992 Conference, and the national and international preparations for it, can be the driving force behind the advancement of fundamental change. And I would like to propose some specific recommendations we believe would help ensure a successful conference.

The 1992 conference must clearly address environment and development from the perspective of all Members of the United Nations. It will be about the principle of conserving resources and planning our economies so that sustainable growth is possible. Political decision makers at the highest level must directly participate to ensure that the Conference leads to real follow-up action. We endorse the offer to host the Conference made by Brazil, a country that has come to symbolize for many of us the dilemmas inherent in world-scale sustainable development.

We support a preparatory process designed to ensure that the 1992 meetings focus on defining world priorities, schedules and targets for action. We believe that the membership of the committee charged with this work must reflect the importance world leaders attach to these vital issues. This preparatory committee must also have the widest possible membership, and we commit ourselves to active participation.

Developing countries must be encouraged to bring to the Conference the energy and commitment to the environment demonstrated at the recent Non-Aligned Movement Summit. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China and Eastern Europe, with

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which Canada has many common concerns and shared hopes for a better environment, will also be crucial partners.

We, in Canada, see the environment as a shared responsibility. The 1992 Conference cannot be a true success unless it reflects a partnership approach - all levels of government, business, labour, advocacy groups and individuals should be involved in national preparations and in the Conference itself.

Finally, we believe that young people, who will inherit the consequences of the decisions and actions of the present, must have a special place at the Conference. We encourage the organizers to give prominence to youth in the preparatory process. For our part, Canada will hold a series of regional and national youth conferences to help prepare our positions for 1992.

(continued in French)

Clearly, climate change will be a priority issue for 1992 and the invaluable work of the intergovernmental panel on climate change must help clear the way for a framework convention on this problem. As Prime Minister Mulroney advocated in 1988, it is Canada's hope that this convention be signed at, or before, the 1992 Conference.

Some nations are advocating that preparatory negotiations of protocols on greenhouse gases should not await the signature of the framework convention in 1992. Canada is among those countries prepared to attempt to develop, for signing at the 1992 Conference, the first of the necessary protocols. While such a target is politically ambitious, Canada believes that our international determination must be equal to the potential crisis posed by the climate change.

Agreed approaches on ways of better managing the Earth's resources are essential if we are to combat successfully such serious problems as air and water pollution, deforestation, desertification, depletion of fish stocks, soil degradation and loss of species, as well as the poverty and famine they engender.

(Mr. Bouchard, Canada)

At the same time, we must ensure sustainable economic growth for all. We must leave 1992 with a clear blueprint for action that will take us well into the twenty-first century.

But if there is one message I want to leave you today, it is that we simply cannot wait until 1992 to act. We must start today to advance the issues and solutions as quickly as possible.

We must strengthen the Montreal Protocol by next year, and increase the number of signatories.

A convention on biological diversity is urgently required. Every day that passes sees another species lost for ever.

The conservation of our common resources is essential, whether marine resources, temperate and tropical forests, air, water or minerals. We must co-operate to eliminate practices such as pelagic drift-net fishing and overfishing off the Atlantic coast.

We must also move now to save our endangered open spaces through the creation of a global network of protected areas. We are perhaps the last generation with the opportunity to save the final remnants of our natural heritage and wilderness.

There is clear need for yardsticks to define problems as well as to measure our progress. Work has begun on environmental quality indicators, and they must be as useful and understandable to the public and decision makers as are current economic indicators such as the rate of inflation.

The United Nations was formed in the 1940s following the great cataclysm of the Second World War. Today, an environmental cataclysm is no less threatening. Guns and bombs are not involved; the threat is incremental and thus very difficult to present as a crisis. We are threatened not with immediate destruction, which is palpable, but with a pervasive and gradual degeneration of the planet's life-support systems.

(Mr. Bouchard, Canada)

Incremental crisis presents a challenge for world leadership. New dimensions in political will and international decision-making are required.

The 1992 Conference will only be a step on a much longer journey. But, quite possibly, it will be the single most important step we shall take in the decade; and without it, the journey itself might be sidetracked or delayed catastrophically.

Moreover, failure to make 1992 a success would be the admission by our generation to those that follow that we lacked the political will, the boldness and imagination to meet these problems in our time. Failure to make 1992 a success would shift our burden on to the shoulders of future generations, thus breaking a sacred trust.

Canadians are not prepared to leave their youth the legacy of a mortgaged environment. We stand ready to do our share, and more, and to be generous with our knowledge and financial resources.

Canadians know that change is needed. We acknowledge that we are privileged and that the privileges of the past bring responsibilities for the future.

Canada urges the General Assembly to give its full blessing to the 1992 Conference, and we call on all nations to join the epic struggle to ensure our common future.

Mr. CHIRINOS CALERO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The title of the item before us, environment and development, is recognition of a reality that cannot in practice be disregarded. Just as deterioration of the environment is largely the result of patterns of production and consumption that for centuries have been unmindful of the environment and natural resources, re-establishing a balance and improving the quality of the environment in countries, regions and even world wide cannot be brought about without considering the close interrelationship

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with models, levels and rates of development. This truth, which today is evident to all, represents one of the most important conceptual advances of the past decades.

The very fact that in this major forum for deliberations between countries measures to confront and prevent world-scale environmental problems are being discussed and that these problems are being linked to development reflects the importance and the extent of this awareness among societies and Governments.

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Environmental deterioration and its principal effects transcend regions and national borders; today they are recognized as problems that affect the world as a whole. The survival of mankind will depend, in the not-too-distant future, on the international community's ability to agree on new patterns of development and progress that will protect the environment and living conditions on Earth.

We all share this idea, but if it is to go beyond good intentions there will have to be fundamental changes in the way nations manage the world economy, as well as the incorporation and mass distribution of new technologies.

This has become even more important, in view of the fact that the decade of the 1980s has seen a substantial decrease in the standard of living of large portions of mankind, as well as a devastating increase in extreme poverty. The economic, social and ecological implications of this situation are not confined within State borders or limited to particular regions.

Linking environmental conservation and development implies accepting that, in the long term, the cost of environmental deterioration will always be higher than the cost of protecting the environment in the immediate future. Furthermore, it demands that every nation take environmental factors into account in its development plans and programmes, since only those will effectively make environment and development compatible.

The new international interdependence offers highly promising opportunities, but it also entails risks and new concerns. Many of the traditional problems not only continue to exist but have worsened, and other problems have appeared that endanger the continuation of life on our planet. The case of environmental deterioration is one such problem.

The ecological issue leaves little room for indifference or irresponsibility. Moreover, if in the interplay of interests and the defence of positions that characterize the economic debate it is necessary to abandon positions of

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confrontation and to accept joint responsibility in order to achieve greater world harmony, then with regard to environmental issues joint responsibility is an indispensable condition.

We must know when, where and how problems arise. There are causes that must be distinguished because of the very nature of the problems, the different levels of development of countries, and unequal processes in regard to dynamics in the use of technologies. We must also realize that, in addition, there are deliberate efforts to transfer environmental problems from one place to another, as well as resistance to the correction of imbalances, and interests that disregard world concern for the environment.

This implies assuming that in the industrial- and technological-production centres the environmental issue has not been fully incorporated, and that this has led to the widespread use of highly pollutant production methods, which define the development systems of a majority of countries.

The change towards healthy technologies cannot be approached in a commercial or profit-making perspective. For this transition to be successful, it is essential that new technological patterns be designed, new rules for technology transfers adopted, and resources supplied, without imposing new financial conditions, but respecting the objectives and priorities of all countries, particularly the developing nations, as well as their sovereignty over their natural resources.

It is also necessary that action take into account the fact that many nations and peoples, because they are afflicted by conditions of extreme poverty and must concentrate their efforts on survival, can do little or nothing, compared to those that have the most, to contribute to the environmental struggle that is being waged. Therefore, to insist that developing countries take a more active role in

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the environmental struggle without significant betterment in their financial and economic situations and in the welfare of their people would be counter-productive in the long term.

Recognition of the fundamental causes of world ecological problems should lead inevitably to recognition of the role to be played by each of us to achieve an effective solution of the problems. It should encourage a more equitable and just distribution of responsibilities and the creation of a climate of genuine world concern and co-operation in order to prevent dissipation of effort, unilateral approaches and attitudes of reciprocal blame, which only delay the application of corrective measures and complicate the environmental situation even further.

We should recognize, for example, that the risk of climate changes involves both the intensive use of fossil fuels in major urban and industrial centres and the accelerated process of deforestation and the destruction of natural resources in regions with different levels of relative development. Just as we cannot ask any nation, regardless of its degree of development, to cancel its technological and industrial progress, neither can we demand that nations abandon their only possibilities for survival without offering them proper alternatives for their well-being.

The depletion of the ozone layer is another example. Let me refer to my country's position concerning the manner in which this problem should be confronted. Mexico, as a signatory to the Montreal Protocol, has assumed a commitment before the international community to eliminate the production and use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by the end of this century, and we are fulfilling our commitment. However, we account for only 1 per cent of world production of these substances. Obviously, the greatest effort will have to come from the nations that are leaders in their production and from those that have the technological capacity needed to find replacements.

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By the same token, greater participation by all nations will be required to control movements of wastes between national borders so as to prevent the increasing pollution of seas and oceans. Experience has shown that it is useless to clean up one place by polluting others, or to preserve one resource by destroying another. For, in the long run, degradation and pollution will end up besieging or undermining even those increasingly reduced areas that we are trying to preserve. In spite of the evidence, very few nations have signed the Basel agreement and, it must be noted, the countries that pollute the most are precisely those that are showing the greatest resistance to signing this agreement and putting it into effect.

Just as causes must be differentiated, solutions also must be adapted to the conditions of each region and country. Much depends not only on their role in the problem, but also on the response capacity of their societies.

In my country's opinion, nations must work in two directions. On the one hand, we must work domestically by tackling the most critical problems and incorporating environmental considerations into new development processes. On the other, we must make every effort to expand international co-operation and translate it into tangible results.

In my country the fight against pollution has the highest political priority. Mexicans are demanding strong measures to check the degradation of the natural-resources base and the pollution in cities, river basins and coastal areas. The metropolitan area of Mexico City is the most dramatic and extreme example of what can result from inequalities in development, particularly when their impact on the environment is not taken into consideration.

The metropolitan area of Mexico City, with the largest population in the world, is also the world's most polluted area. Eighteen million inhabitants demand services comparable to those of several European countries, and the city receives

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270,000 immigrants each year; there are 2.5 million vehicles and 6.5 million metric tons of pollutants are produced annually.

Cleaning up this city is a priority of the Mexican Government that cannot be postponed. Mexico is currently involved in diplomatic negotiations with the Governments of various countries, such as Japan, the United States and Sweden, which have the experience and resources to establish agreements for technological and financial co-operation. The purpose is to take radical measures to tackle this problem, which, if not reversed, may develop, along with other regional processes, into a risk factor that will jeopardize the world's ecology.

Alongside this priority programme and other measures being taken in different cities in Mexico, we are taking firm action in natural reserve areas, particularly the Selva Lacandona, since these areas have strategic and irreplaceable ecological resources which are the heritage of the Mexican people but which can be enjoyed by all mankind. The Mexican Government has taken the political decision to act, as a matter of priority, to reverse the process of environmental deterioration and fight for the establishment of a new type of growth. Environmental concerns are to be incorporated into all the projects that are part of the 1989-1994 National Development Plan - the instrument through which the Government's activities are organized and the society's actions are co-ordinated.

My country's commitment to and serious attitude regarding environmental issues are also attested to by our intensive international efforts in support of greater co-operation among nations in this respect. We are represented in virtually all the international and regional forums in the field; in 1972 we subscribed to the main initiatives deriving from the Stockholm Conference, such as the Montreal Protocol and the Basel agreement; we are in the process of adhering to the international convention on endangered species; and, bilaterally, we have promoted closer ties with a large number of countries through technical-co-operation

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programmes or through specific agreements. These include the countries of the European Economic Community and of Latin America and the Caribbean, Canada, Japan and, increasingly, our immediate neighbors - Guatemala and the United States.

We are thus shouldering our responsibility, and we are certain that it is the only way to prevent our internal processes from causing greater deterioration of regional and global ecological balances. Nevertheless, it is necessary to accept the fact that, as in many other countries, our efforts are limited by severe financial and economic restrictions, which shows the importance of international co-operation.

Therefore, it is essential that we strengthen the authority and the activities of the United Nations, in order to provide the Organization with the sufficient capacity to resolve conflicts, reconcile differences and generate consensus to ensure general compliance with resolutions and agreements that are adopted.

My delegation believes that significant agreement exists regarding the priority areas to which the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development must direct its attention.

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These areas are: first, protection of the atmosphere, combating climatic changes and excessive global warming - it is clear that we must achieve an international convention on this matter; second, the depletion of the ozone layer and air pollution; third, protection of the quality and availability of drinking water; fourth, protection of the oceans and coastal areas; fifth, protection of land resources, combating desertification; sixth, preservation of biological diversity; seventh, proper environmental management of toxic and hazardous waste; and, eighth, protection of the conditions for human health and quality of life.

The 1992 Conference will provide an excellent opportunity for agreement, at the highest level, on alternatives and solutions to serious world ecological problems. The overall objective of the Conference, in the view of our delegation, will be to achieve concrete commitments and make progress towards agreements on legal instruments required to cope with the major environmental problems. This meeting should analyse and propose solutions to the main economic, financial and technical problems faced by developing countries in protecting their environment and natural resources.

It will be equally important to devise clear mechanisms within the United Nations to follow up on the responsibilities and commitments undertaken by each country. The Conference should also perform the essential task of achieving agreements to increase available resources for developing countries in accordance with their needs, and to provide access to scientific knowledge and alternative anti-pollution technologies on preferential bases.

Finally, allow me to state that the goal of achieving environmentally sound development that will benefit all mankind and that will not destroy possibilities of progress for future generations can only be achieved at the world level. Sustainable development, because of the world-wide nature of the major ecological

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problems, cannot be seen as a viable objective within separate or isolated borders or regions. A common effort at the international level is required.

The Government of Mexico believes that the environment and the ecological balance of our planet are responsibilities that are shared by all mankind. Therefore, we shall continue adopting measures and participating in any international initiative that is aimed at the restoration of the environment and its sustained conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mexico regards with sympathy and fully supports the proposal that Brazil be the venue for the International Conference on Environment and Development. We thus reaffirm the great interest with which all Latin American Governments undertake actions in matters of preservation of the environment and their substantial efforts to that effect.

The proper preparation and the success of the 1992 Conference constitute a major challenge for the international community represented in the General Assembly. Therefore, this session faces a great responsibility. We must achieve a substantive agreement on the scope and objectives of the Conference. Mexico will do its utmost to achieve that goal.

Mr. TÖFFER (Federal Republic of Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): I should like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly.

At the start of today's debate, the representative of France, my colleague, Brice Lalonde, outlined the position of the European Community and its member States on the question of convening the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Federal Republic of Germany fully supports this Community view. In the light of the special political significance my Government attaches to

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improved international co-operation in the field of environment protection, I should like to add the following observations.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 must lead to a new dimension of an international environment partnership and co-operation in the field of development aid. This Conference must show the way forward and make it possible for man to live in peace with the natural environment. We have overcome the exploitation of man by man. Now we must put an end to man's exploitation of the natural environment.

The real dangers for the global environment necessarily require new thinking and new action. Global threats due to the destruction of the earth's atmosphere, the process of desertification, the pollution of the seas with hazardous substances, the dangers posed to forests, particularly the tropical rain forests: those and other dangers to the very existence of man on Earth can only be met by consistent action within the framework of a global environmental partnership. The cost of doing nothing is dramatic: throughout the world, there will only be losers. No one can win.

The awareness that without a healthy environment there can be no long-term sustainable development anywhere in the world has grown considerably over the past few years in industrial and developing countries alike. Already the damage cannot fail to be seen and the warnings from scientists can no longer be ignored.

The declarations made by the Heads of State or Government meeting at the last Economic Summit in Paris and on the interdependence of ecology and economic development at the ninth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade, were milestones from which it is impossible to turn back.

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Thus, at a global level, we have taken a great step forward towards our common goal of world-wide environmentally compatible sustainable development. This first step must be followed by another, much more difficult one. The knowledge we have gained must be translated into political decision-making and practical policies.

In this, we are all well aware of the fact that the decisive responsibility for ensuring agreed common action on the drastic proportions of environmental pollution must be borne by the industrialized countries. The extremely high energy consumption in our countries, the extensive use of raw materials, and the gaseous, liquid and solid emissions and waste from our industrial production are the important points of departure for the global threat to the environment. We have subsidized our economic growth and our prosperity by allowing the cost of this growth to be borne by nature, by the environment.

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International environmental partnership therefore necessarily demands that we follow rigorous environmental policies at the national level. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has accepted this obligation. By means of strict laws and economic incentives, we are drastically limiting emissions into the air and into water and we are implementing waste avoidance measures. This clear policy of taking precautionary measures to avoid environmental damage has given new effective impetus to the development of environmentally sound technologies. Economic growth is increasingly being detached from increasing energy consumption, environmental pollution and the over-use of natural resources. We are prepared to promote the transfer of these environmental technologies, in particular to developing countries, but also to the States members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. We have already concluded bilateral agreements on the environment with most of the States in Eastern Europe. We strongly support the follow-up meeting in Sofia of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe which is dealing with important transboundary environmental problems.

A rigorous environment policy at home, the transfer of environmental technology and their use in neighbouring States - those are our initial answers to the global threats to the environment.

The world certainly does consist of many nations, but we all have only one common environment, only one blue planet we all share. Thus in spite of our national differences and in the interest of generations to come, we are forced to face environmental problems of global proportions together and solve them in close environmental partnership.

We have been able to see the initial results of negotiations over the past few years. I am thinking here of the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol and the Basel Convention on the Control of

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Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes - successes to which the United Nations has made a considerable contribution, thanks to its Environment Programme and particularly its Executive Director, Mr. Tolba. It is our wish to strengthen this institution still further, and we have doubled our financial contribution this year. Co-ordinated international measures to the benefit of the environment need a strong and politically legitimized organization. We must create the prerequisites for immediate and competent measures to be taken in case of topical environmental burdens and catastrophes posing a threat to the environment.

The Federal Government decided to implement these international agreements as soon as possible and to take even stricter measures on the national level. Thus the production and use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) will end by 1995 at the latest. We are a signatory of the Basel Convention. We are ready to support the countries of the third world in word and deed in overcoming their waste problems.

We are faced with grave global environmental tasks with which we must urgently deal. Examples are the greenhouse effect, diseased forests and their deforestation, pollution of inland and coastal waters and the continued sharp reduction in the number of species existing in the world today. Finding globally agreed solutions to these problems is one of the major challenges facing those in positions of responsibility in both industrial and developing countries, and it is a challenge we must meet if this planet is to offer an environment in which generations to come are able to lead a decent life.

In 1992, we must demonstrate that we are in a position to take these immense tasks in hand. The United Nations conference on environment and development ought not to content itself with mere discussions and declarations. Words must be

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followed by deeds. Very concrete, intensive preparatory work on the basis of resolution 15/3 of the United Nations Environment Programme is undoubtedly required here.

The Federal Republic of Germany is well aware of the fact that not every country will be in a position to meet the necessary environmental requirements on its own. In view of scarce financial means, many developing countries are often caught up in a tragic conflict of aim, torn between the requirements of economic growth, which can often only be achieved by the over-exploitation of natural resources, and the need to conserve those natural resources as the basis of life for generations to come.

In places where millions of people are living in abject material poverty, it is extremely difficult to persuade them that a part of the already small budget at their disposal must be invested in precautionary and remedial measures to protect the environment. By omitting to take measures to protect the environment, people in these countries are literally digging their own graves.

If we really wish to save our common environment, we must start with the real causes: that is, poverty, hunger and development problems. This is the inextricable connection between environment and development. In view of the world-wide, global problems, we must not resign ourselves to accepting the limits of growth. We must ensure environmentally compatible growth in a responsible way.

If the natural environment has to be exploited to pay back debt, then we are merely deceiving ourselves. The release of specific debts in order to conserve nature and a clean environment must become an important instrument of global environmental partnership.

The use of natural resources in many developing countries is often one of the main sources of income. It accounts for more than one third of the gross national

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product, provides around two thirds of the jobs and brings in more than half of the urgently required foreign currency. Furthermore, it is natural resources which form the basis of food for a population which is growing by around one billion every 13 years.

These facts must be taken into account not only in development aid, but also in the field of environmental protection. We are today facing the enormous challenge of bringing economy and ecology into harmony throughout the world. The industrial countries share the responsibility for conserving natural resources in developing countries too. They must give all support necessary.

It is only by means of environmental partnership that we will be able to interrupt the vicious circle of economic growth at the expense of our environment. Helping our neighbours in the South is a crucial investment in our own future. Our future can only be a common future.

The Federal Government has noted with interest the various proposals made to finance aid measures by means of an international fund. The Federal Government does not rule out the possibility that this may indeed be an appropriate way to finance global environmental tasks: a CO₂ charge might be a basis for financing in accordance with the polluter-pays principle. The Federal Government believes, however, that it is too early to make definitive statements on financial models before we have agreed on an overall strategy for our measures, and especially on the appropriate institutional framework for such co-operation. In this context the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is of particular importance. The preparations for the 1992 conference will help to clarify this situation.

We know from experience that international negotiations on the setting up of international funds are usually very drawn out. In view of the urgency of many of the tasks, we have no time to lose. Financial aid should not become a question of

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principle hampering the progress of further negotiations at every step of the way. A pragmatic, flexible and targeted approach: that is, the use of bilateral aid, as well as specific commitments to be made by existing institutes and organizations, should lead more quickly to positive results in the interest of protecting the environment.

As I said at the beginning of my statement, the Federal Government is in full agreement with the comments made by my French colleague, Brice Lalonde, and I should merely like to comment on and to lend my support in particular to the following points.

If the conference is to be successful, it requires a strong, well-informed and experienced Secretary-General who is capable of mediating between the differing interests, bringing them together towards a common denominator acceptable to all but still serving the common purpose.

The Federal Government welcomes the intention of convening the conference in Brazil.

Last but not least, among the various conference topics, the Federal Government attaches particular importance to international agreements on the protection of the Earth's atmosphere. In 1992 a climate convention has to be agreed upon. Supplementary protocols have to be prepared in detail.

This is a particular challenge to the industrialized countries in view of their high contribution to the emissions of greenhouse gases. Long-term protection of the Earth's atmosphere, however, will not be feasible without the early participation of the developing countries in the action strategies. This does not necessarily mean less or slower industrialization in the developing countries. But what it does mean - and I think all of us agree on this - is that industrialization and energy systems must be environmentally compatible.

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An indispensable requirement for this is a transfer of technology. At the same time, research and development projects in the field of alternative energy resources must be generally promoted. The development of clean technologies must be strengthened on a massive scale, and they must be made available on a worldwide basis.

The Federal Government attaches great importance to the environmental-impact assessment of all projects both in industrialized and in developing countries. On the domestic front, the Federal Government is at the moment in the process of making environmental-impact assessments a legal requirement. With regard to development-aid projects it has developed a catalogue containing environmental-impact criteria. By 1992 environmental-impact assessments should have become an every-day exercise both nationally and in bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the field of development aid.

Further conference topics in which the Federal Government is particularly interested include agreements on the conservation of biological diversity and on measures to conserve sufficiently extensive forest areas - from both the ecological and the economic standpoints - throughout the world. The Federal Chancellor, Mr. Kohl, has taken a special interest in the protection of particularly threatened rain forests. It goes without saying that we respect the sovereign rights of these nations. However, we should like to support them as much as possible in the protection and the environmentally compatible use of their forests.

To conclude, we want to see long-term worldwide sustainable development which does not impair the chances of future generations by destroying and depleting our environment through the excessive consumption of energy and resources. The Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to contribute its share to this common task.

(Mr. Töpter, Federal Republic
of Germany)

In all our optimism over the progression of East-West détente towards the goal of people living together in peace, we should not overlook the threat of a serious North-South conflict if we allow the people of the world to become divided into two categories: on the one hand, those who have achieved their high standard of living by the intensive use of natural resources and who want to maintain that standard - albeit from now on taking environmental regulations into account; and, on the other hand, those who cannot make full use of their development potential and are expected to be content with a simple way of life in order to conserve the ecological balance.

Since more and more representatives from developing countries are expressing that view today, then we should all take it very seriously and use the time at our disposal to bring about environmentally compatible, sustainable development, instead of wasting it by indulging in mutual recriminations.

The answer to global environmental problems must be a global environmental partnership, which means - for us - a partnership between North and South in order to conserve our common environment. In 1992 the United Nations conference on environment and development will have to work out a viable basis and effective strategies for such a partnership, and the Federal Republic of Germany is going to make its contribution to the achievement of that goal.

Mr. BEILONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Today the General Assembly is discussing an issue of paramount importance. The task of protecting the environment and saving our planet from an environmental catastrophe has lately moved to centre stage among problems common to all mankind and is now no less important than the problem of protecting mankind from a nuclear threat.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The international community is facing a new challenge on the threshold of the twentieth century's last decade. Centuries of environmentally unwise development, when nature was light-heartedly regarded as a present to man for all time, are now decidedly taking their toll. It is this generation that will have to pick up the tab to save future generations from environmental disasters and cataclysms.

Certainly, the problem of environmental protection is not new to the United Nations. However, it is unambiguously clear from today's situation that national and international measures taken to date are insufficient to save the planet from a catastrophe. The dynamics of the development of the malady are such that the issues of environmental protection and the prevention and elimination of environmental threats have proved to be directly linked to the fate of civilization and the survival of mankind.

Unprecedented concern over the acuteness of environmental problems was voiced in the general debate of the General Assembly by Heads of State or Government and Foreign Ministers of virtually all States. Many of them linked the task of intensifying co-operation in this area directly to the security of their peoples and of mankind at large. Such a manifestation of high-minded political responsibility cannot but infuse us with optimism. We fully share the hope of the Secretary-General, as expressed in his report on the work of the Organization, that we are witnessing

"... the birth of a new kind of loyalty, an Earth-patriotism, a looking at the planet ... as an object for protection and not for aggression and pillage".

(A/44/1, p. 21)

In our opinion, co-ordinated efforts on the part of the entire international community to save nature and eliminate environmental threats carry the potential of a fundamentally new type of co-operation among States, based from the very outset on an amalgamation of ideological and ambition-free responsibility, goodwill,

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

precise scientific forecasts and information, constructiveness, openness to reaching consensus, and preparedness to understand each other's positions and problems and to lend each other a helping hand. Any other approach would not be consonant with our times.

Today the environmental threat which recognizes no boundaries, ideological differences or trade barriers, which does not distinguish between the rich and the poor, is looming over us all. From the standpoint of intellectual integrity we must admit that all States, albeit to a different extent, have had a role to play here. It is obvious that the industrialized nations, which have behind them decades of unsound economic policies, bear a greater responsibility for the dramatic environmental situation. We are fully aware of the fact also that the majority of developing countries, in conditions of short supply of financial resources and modern technologies and suffering as they do from acute social and economic problems, cannot channel major domestic resources to environmental conservation, or steer their development overnight to an environmentally safe course. These are the stern realities of today, which of course must be taken into account.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

At the same time we are convinced that all States, even today, can join in efforts to save nature on the basis of a common commitment to the protection of mankind from environmental threats and a political readiness to abide by agreed principles and norms of environmental conduct. Everyone can play an important role in building an environmentally safe world. Differing contributions could be made towards building it - providing on a voluntary basis experience and information, technical expertise and modern, environmentally sound technologies; allocating additional resources for international environmental protection measures; or, at the very least, consistently pursuing environmentally sound policies. We are persuaded that the protection of the environment must be ensured on a planetary scale. Uncoordinated action narrows the sphere of co-operation. The 1992 conference on environment and development is called upon to co-ordinate our efforts and to forge an international consensus on ways to harmonize the relationship between man and nature.

Our vision of the aims and purposes of the conference is set forth in detail in a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze, to the United Nations Secretary-General on 15 May 1989 (A/44/278).

The conference must elaborate and negotiate a comprehensive, realistic strategy for the ecological survival of our planet. It must be comprehensive in the sense that it encompasses all areas of environmental protection co-operation, ranging from early identification and assessment of environmental threats and risks and the elaboration of emergency preventive action to defining ways to address existing long-term environmental problems and creating international machinery for urgent assistance in environmental emergencies. The strategy will be realistic providing, when it is put together, all economic, political, social, scientific, technical and legal aspects of this problem, as well as the specific circumstances and possibilities of individual countries and groups of countries, are taken into

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

account; providing it contains economic and legal guarantees to ensure compliance by all States with the rules of an environmentally sound world community; and finally, and perhaps most important, providing it is capable of responding to the scale and urgency of the modern global environmental situation.

Our ability to carry out effectively and expeditiously the task of safeguarding environmental security on the basis of a universal balance of interests and promotion of the principle of multilateralism in solving global problems is to a considerable degree dependent upon enhancement of the institutional framework of international environmental co-operation and, above all, promotion of the role and effectiveness of the United Nations, its organs and organizations.

We see possible ways of strengthening United Nations potential in this area by enhancing the co-ordinating functions and material basis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), while giving due weight to the decisions and recommendations of its Governing Council. There is also considerable potential in enhancement of the co-ordination of all the organizations of the United Nations family, primarily, UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), the regional economic commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other development agencies. The Economic and Social Council, as the central co-ordinating body in the United Nations system, is also called upon to play a major role here. So far the potential of such principal organs of the United Nations as the Security Council and the International Court of Justice have not been used for purposes of environmental protection. We are referring here not to the punitive functions of these organs but rather to their inherent preventive potential and their considerable political role in the constructive development of international co-operation.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet Union is ready to consider most carefully and constructively any proposals to change or improve United Nations machinery in the environmental sphere, including initiatives concerning the creation of additional bodies.

There is another consideration in this regard. The genuine risk of environmental emergencies and accidents with serious consequences for the environment places on our agenda the question how to ensure a high degree of preparedness on the part of the international community to eliminate them speedily and provide assistance to people in distress. This is the rationale of the Soviet proposal to establish within the United Nations, a centre for emergency environmental assistance, which initially could quite easily be organized on the basis of existing United Nations structures and without any financial implications for the regular budget.

One major aspect of preparations for the conference is provision of the necessary material infrastructure for conducting large-scale international activities to protect the environment, including the provision of appropriate assistance to developing countries. This infrastructure should include ways and means of ensuring the introduction and wide dissemination on preferential terms of up-to-date conservation and environmentally sound technologies, and at the same time of raising additional funds. I stress that we see in saving financial resources through arms control and disarmament and world-wide conversion of a part of military production to meet the needs of environmental protection an enormous positive potential both for alleviating the environmental threat as a whole and for mobilizing financial and technological resources.

Of particular importance are questions regarding the transparency of environmental information, the wide dissemination of scientific data and experience, regular reporting by States on their conservation activities and notification of all environmental accidents. Glasnost in these matters is a

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

sine qua non if we are to internationalize efforts to protect the environment. At the same time it is a potent confidence-building factor, and a basis for the expeditious adoption of effective measures to prevent or mitigate threats to the environment.

Interrelated with these challenges are the questions of promoting a new ecological awareness among the population, educating the young in this new spirit and co-operating effectively with national and international non-governmental organizations and movements that champion the cause of keeping our planet clean.

Recently, particularly during the current session of the General Assembly, many States have made a number of far-reaching and interesting initiatives on the environment, both relating to preparations for the 1992 conference and focusing on more general issues. We are encouraged by this abundance of ideas and proposals. It is noteworthy that not only are there virtually no contradictions among them, but they complement and enrich each other. We are convinced that all these initiatives represent the unique contribution of various countries to a collective treasure-house of ecological wisdom and that therefore they should be most carefully taken into consideration and brought to a common denominator when preparing for the conference. What should matter here is not so much who was the author of any particular idea or whose initiative will carry off the palm, as it were, but the extent to which the idea serves the overall task of building an environmentally safe world.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

We are in favour of Brazil as the venue for the conference - this venue is supported also by the Non-Aligned Movement - and express our appreciation to the Government of that highly respected country for its offer to serve as host to such a prestigious international forum.

The main thing now, we think, is to proceed without delay and in a constructive spirit to the practical conceptual stage in preparing for the conference. We attach political importance to the quality of the preparations that precede this major international conference, which the Soviet Union proposes should be held at the highest level. That will make it possible to promote international dialogue on this vital problem to a fundamentally new level, as well as laying the groundwork for an environmentally sound world for the twenty-first century and providing safeguards for mankind's ecological survival.

To achieve results at the conference, which is intended to be the climax of global environmental co-operation, it is important that all upcoming international ecological meetings and activities on the environment be aimed at preparing for the conference and contributing to it.

Quite understandably, it is efforts on the national level that serve as a basis for successful and fruitful international co-operation in solving global problems. Purposeful nature-conservation activities are a major component of perestroika in our country. For us it is of major importance to complete by 1990 our own nation-wide environmental programme, which is now being drawn up, taking full account of the specific realities of the environmental situation in the country as well as practical measures to integrate the nature-conservation factor into economic activities, and, most importantly, of the exalted and well-founded demands voiced at the First Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR. We understand that it is only on that basis that we can honestly and openly

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

participate in international co-operation. Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev stated quite forthrightly that in the environmental sphere

"The Soviet Union will act strictly within the framework of existing agreements and international programmes and will soon join in those of them to which it has not been a party until now".

The two and a half years that separate us from the conference will undoubtedly be a period of intense and complex work whose preparation will require tremendous intellectual effort and political will. At the same time, we are convinced that many practical issues regarding the way to foster international co-operation in the environmental field can be resolved even prior to the conference. Two and a half years is not a short period when we consider the dynamism of our times and the ongoing nature of our environmental disease. The time we still have to defuse the environmental delayed-action bomb is running out.

In the present conditions of an extreme environmental time-pressure, prompt action must be taken.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform delegations that agenda item 32, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", will be taken up at the morning plenary meeting on Wednesday, 25 October 1989, as the first item. A draft resolution on this item will be circulated tomorrow as document A/44/L.17.

AGENDA ITEM 82 (continued)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

- (f) ENVIRONMENT: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2)

Mr. DING Yuanhong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): We welcome the inclusion in the agenda of the current General Assembly session of the item on the

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992. This decision shows how much attention and importance the international community has accorded to the question of environment and development. We appreciate the substantial introduction to this question contained in the Secretary-General's report. We have also noted the systematic expositions on the question of the environment in the statements of many delegations at this session. Quite a few constructive proposals have been put forward. All this, in our view, is very useful for our deliberations on this agenda item.

In recent years the question of the environment has aroused ever-increasing concern in the international community. It features more and more prominently on the agenda of United Nations bodies. Last year the General Assembly at its forty-third session adopted by consensus resolution 43/196 on the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development. That decision to hold a second conference on human environment 20 years after the Stockholm Conference reflected the common aspiration of United Nations Member States to strengthen international co-operation in protecting the human environment. We support that decision and hope that the convening of this conference will become a new milestone for international efforts to achieve sustainable development and a better human environment by providing new guidelines for international co-operation in this field during the 1990s and beyond.

The Chinese delegation has on many occasions expounded on its principled position on the proposed conference. Here I wish to outline some of the key points of that position.

On the venue of the conference, the Chinese delegation favours the holding of the 1992 conference in a developing country with a view to directing greater international attention to the environmental and development problems facing developing countries, where the overwhelming majority of the world's population

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

lives. We have noted with appreciation that Brazil has offered to play host to this conference - a gesture that is supported by the Group of 77 and the non-aligned countries. China also supports the Brazilian proposal.

On the conference's objective, scope and content, the Chinese delegation believes that in the consideration of those points the following questions should not be neglected.

First, the environment issue and the development issue should be approached as an organic whole with economic development and protection of the environment pursued in a synchronized and co-ordinated fashion. Separating the two will end up hurting both. Protection of the environment cannot be truly effective without economic development, while neglect of protection of the environment will in the end retard sustainable development.*

* Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

Secondly, there are still many unjust and irrational elements in existing international economic relations, with acute imbalances in the production and consumption patterns as between the developing countries on the one hand and the developed countries on the other. In addressing the question of global environment these elements should be taken fully into account so that the actions taken in this field will promote balanced development of the world economy. In the long run, only by bringing about an international economic environment that is just and conducive to sustainable development in all countries can there be a fundamental change in the state of poverty, underdevelopment and powerlessness with regard to environmental protection in the developing countries.

Thirdly, as the question of the environment involves the common and long-term interests of mankind as a whole, international co-operation should be strengthened. World wide the damage to the environment at present is caused mainly by the developed industrial countries. Therefore they should bear the principal responsibility for improving the global environment. At the same time, the developed countries should help the developing countries with their tasks of environmental protection by taking more concrete action in such areas as transfers of capital and technology. In this respect, the developed countries and international financial institutions should provide new funds for development assistance to developing countries without imposing additional conditionality on the ground of environmental considerations.

Fourthly, poverty remains an important cause of deterioration of the environment in the developing countries. In these countries, the achievement of appropriate economic growth and of the ability to meet the population's basic needs constitute the necessary prerequisite for effective environmental protection and improvement. Obviously, it would be unrealistic to talk these countries into protecting their environment without at the same time addressing their development

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

concerns. It should be pointed out emphatically that environmental protection should not be pursued at the expense of the development of the developing countries. Still less should it be used as an excuse for wilful interference in the development strategy of the developing countries or encroachment upon their permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.

Fifthly, it is undoubtedly imperative to step up international legislation on the environment question. Protection of the global environment is the common responsibility of the entire international community. Therefore relevant laws and statutes should be formulated with the broadest possible participation of all countries, especially the developing countries. Full account should be taken of the special difficulties and needs of the developing countries and of their social and economic ability to sustain possible consequences while protecting their crucial interests from undue damage. In this respect the United Nations can play a greater role.

The Chinese delegation believes that these points are essential to the success of the scheduled conference.

Concerning the preparatory work for the conference, we are in favour of creating broadly representative machinery for this purpose. To facilitate wider participation by all Member States, such machinery should carry out its activities mainly in New York. Where financial resources permit, however, its meetings could also be held in a number of other places with a view to raising public awareness of environment and development issues in all parts of the world.

We have noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has done a good deal of work in preparation for the conference. We hope that it will continue to play its important role in the preparatory process and contribute its expertise to ensure the success of the conference. At the same

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

time, we hope to see fruitful participation in this process by various organisations within the United Nations system.

China was a co-sponsor of resolution 43/196, and the Chinese Government attaches great importance to international co-operation in the environmental field and to the 1992 conference. The Chinese delegation has been actively involved in the preparatory work so far. We look forward to meaningful dialogue and consultations with all parties during this session on questions concerning the conference, with a view to reaching a consensus on them.

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): With the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, there began an important process of growing awareness at the political, economic and social levels in our countries of the close interrelationship of man and his environment. A debate began in all spheres on man's impact on the environment, which led to the conclusion that it was necessary to adopt a fresh approach to that relationship, which was a denial of the major role the environment plays in the existence of man.

Since then, there has been a great deal of activity, which has produced some changes in that orientation. Unfortunately, however, we have to recognize that the process of environmental deterioration has speeded up and reached a truly alarming rate, causing irreversible changes in the Earth's ecosystem.

One of the most important features of the development of the environmental problem is its internationalization. Indeed, it can be said that there is wide recognition of the fact that environmental problems are present in and linked to every area of human activity.

Of course, that international dimension must not lead us to ignore the responsibility and the role of the various actors in this interaction of man and his environment.

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

The obligation to face the consequences of the indifference of the past, and to some extent of the present, should not merely be recognized, as it has been in the United Nations, but should be translated into a political commitment to begin the rebuilding and conservation of the environment. That commitment must be shouldered mainly by the developed countries, which have the means of checking the deterioration that we are now experiencing.

Developing countries such as Venezuela have accepted their responsibility, although it is much less than that of the developed countries, notwithstanding the difficulties our economies are experiencing. This was demonstrated recently by the draft general budget of public revenue and expenditure adopted by the Council of Ministers of my country and submitted for consideration by the National Congress. Some 2.8 per cent of the total budget has been earmarked for the activities of the Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, which was created in 1976 and has since played a major role in the intensive work being done in connection with conservation and monitoring of the environment.

We continue to persevere on the path we have chosen to prevent and control ecological damage. For this purpose, we are prepared to enter into the necessary international agreements, but we also have to deal with our need for growth and overall economic development.

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

The idea of an international conference on environment and development seemed to us a most felicitous initiative. From the very outset, we have lent our support to that idea, because we are convinced of the global and interdependent nature of any possible solution to environmental issues. The conference will have to take a look at all the experience accumulated and steps taken to date in the realm of the environment in order to evaluate the degree of environmental deterioration and the effectiveness of the struggle that has been waged by the international community at all levels to fight further deterioration. In the light of the experience gained, proposals must be worked out and lead to specific action by the international community.

The stages of evaluation and proposal of measures must consistently incorporate the linkage with the development process. In other words, the conference must not be handled as a technocratic exercise where fundamentally "environmentalist" recommendations are hammered out, recommendations that do not take into consideration the nexus between the environment and poverty, between the environment and the generation of a dynamic, overall development process.

Whatever the course of action followed by both developed and developing regions in the years ahead, there can be no question but that the close ties between economic and social elements and those of the environment must be taken into account. One of these major elements is external debt. The environmental conservationist factor has been incorporated as a major goal in national development plans, but at the same time, investments in the realm of protecting against environmental degradation have been scheduled. Some have called this managing development, wherein environmental approaches have to take into account, in an integral way, a process that tries to achieve the greatest possible output with a minimum of environmental destruction and waste. This integrated process that calls for significant investments in the area of training people and creating

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

and acquiring new technology, inter alia, is being prevented from taking shape now and for the foreseeable future because there is still a negative transfer of resources that deprives debtor developing countries of the financial resources they need to finance sustainable development as envisaged by the Group of 77 in the Caracas Declaration this year.

These negative circumstances of internal indebtedness, which compel us to take a new approach to national planning, are compounded by outside requirements such as those imposed by international financing institutions which, as they establish new requirements, still further restrict the ability of the debtor countries to make additional efforts in the environmental realm, and therefore in the area of development in general.

Environment is not confined, in terms of its interrelations, to economic factors, but also has links with social factors. The conference must pay attention to the participatory nature of our societies as we seek to manage the environment. The thinking to come out of the conference must lead people to spur forward the global process of development of the world-wide ecosystem while avoiding giving short shrift to environmental issues, as has been the tendency to date.

In our judgement, the world conference on environment and development, a title that we believe accurately describes the scope and nature of this international dialogue, should be held in one of the beautiful cities in Brazil in 1992. The conference should last for two weeks, with a part being devoted to things technical and another to bringing together plenipotentiaries. The technical phase would be set aside for the process of refining and perfecting arrangements or commitments worked out within a preparatory committee, which would have open-ended membership. This committee might be a committee of the whole of the General Assembly: in other words, an intergovernmental committee assisted by a general secretariat drawn from

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

bodies throughout the system that deal with environmental and development issues, including principally the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The general secretariat should have its headquarters at the same place where the meetings of the preparatory committee would be held - which, in our opinion, should be United Nations Headquarters here in New York.

The committee of the whole should not be only a body that co-ordinates steps to be taken at other levels where examination and preparation of recommendations to be issued in various areas would be carried out; it should also be a centre for negotiation and decision-making prior to the holding of the conference itself. The other levels of authority should have a predominantly technical focus. Beyond that, we believe the conference should produce an overall commitment to undertake actual steps at various levels - international, regional and national alike. We would be open to examining the suitability of the various ways such commitments might be expressed, whether in the form of a global convention or some other instruments with varying degrees of bindingness. This will depend, in large measure, on the evolution of the preparatory process.

The conference will have to deal with environmental issues both on Earth and in outer space, in keeping with the degree of urgency deriving from the degradation already witnessed. The subjects of marine resources, the atmosphere, deforestation, illegal international trafficking in and dumping of toxic products and waste, human, technological and financial resources, conservation of international watersheds, are just a few of the issues the conference will have to deal with decisively if we truly wish to bring about substantive change in the environmental field and to stimulate appropriate development.

Venezuela is keenly interested in making this conference a success, given the far-reaching impact it will have in all areas of our national and international life. Environmental preservation, monitoring and restoration are issues we

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

approach with resolve and a sense of responsibility towards our neighbours, our region, and the world as a whole. We see in the 1992 conference a marvellous opportunity to harmonize and rationalize the ever-changing nature of development and its permanent relationship with the environment.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): The attention of the world community is now increasingly focused on the proposed 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development, which will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, held in 1972. It is expected that the conference will formulate and adopt a set of policy guidelines to address urgent environmental issues, for unless we succeed in collectively deciding on actions to be taken in response to global environmental problems in the 1990s and beyond, the very survival of mankind and, indeed, the future of the planet Earth itself will be jeopardized. Given the gravity of the problems besetting the global environment, it is imperative that the proposed conference succeed.

Throughout the 17 years since the Stockholm Conference, there has been a growing awareness of the problem of environmental degradation, and advances in scientific knowledge have revealed new dimensions of the problem, such as global warming and ozone depletion, which were not foreseen at that time. These and other phenomena are growing more acute with each passing day. If left unchecked, they may well destroy fragile ecosystems, thereby threatening the very foundation of sound economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The problems are global in nature; their solution, likewise, will require the co-operative efforts of the entire international community, including both developed and developing countries. As Japan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Nakayama, stated last month, in his address to the General Assembly,

"Our generation has a solemn responsibility to preserve the natural beauty around us and rebuild a healthy global environment so as to secure the future of coming generations." (A/44/PV.7, p. 32)

In the light of that, Japan attaches great importance to the 1992 conference. We hope that it will conduct a thorough review of all international endeavours undertaken so far in this area and that it will consider, in a long-term perspective, possible concrete actions to be taken by Governments and international organizations to strengthen efforts to conserve the global environment. In this connection, I should like to note that Japan fully endorses the decision taken at the fifteenth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which addresses all the important elements regarding the proposed conference.

Given the increasingly acute awareness of environmental issues worldwide, a number of conferences have been held on environmental problems, including protection of the ozone layer, atmospheric warming and toxic products. Against this background, we are of the view that the conference in 1992 should have two basic purposes. First, it should conduct an intensive and overall review of the measures and actions taken so far by countries and international organizations in their efforts to protect the environment. Secondly, it should provide a forum to study, on the basis of such a review, future actions to be taken by countries and international organizations in response to global environmental problems. These possible actions should be examined thoroughly at the preparatory stage so as to ensure, through close co-ordination of ideas between Governments and related

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

international organizations, that they will be acceptable to all countries. In this regard, we believe that the strengthening of UNEP and related United Nations bodies will also merit our consideration.

Regarding the scope of the conference, though it might be difficult to define it clearly at this stage, we are of the view that, in the light of the paramount necessity to achieve sustainable development as proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development, and in the light of the current trend in public awareness worldwide, the conference should deal with wide-ranging issues having environmental implications, with particular emphasis on the following three areas: first, measures to cope with global warming; secondly, management of natural resources, including the protection of tropical forests; and, thirdly, assistance to developing countries.

Regarding the last point, I should like to stress that particular consideration should be given to balancing environmental protection and economic development. Our ultimate goal should not be the advancement of one at the cost of the other but, rather, an interactive harmonization of the two.

In this connection, I should like to refer to the Tokyo Conference on the Global Environment and Human Response toward Sustainable Development, which was held last month under the auspices of my Government, in co-operation with UNEP. Constructive and scientific discussions were conducted at the conference, and recommendations on such crucial issues as global warming and the relationship between environment and development in developing countries were put forward in the Chairman's summary. It is our hope that this document, with its valuable recommendations based on scientific analysis, will serve as an important guideline for our discussions at this session of the General Assembly as we prepare for the 1992 conference.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

The success of the conference will be determined in large part at the preparatory stage. We should make maximum use, through effective co-ordination, of the existing human and financial resources, both within and outside the United Nations system. Thus UNEP has a pivotal role to play in preparing for the conference and ensuring its success. We hold the view, in this respect, that it will be vital to ensure co-ordination in three areas: first, between the Secretariat of the United Nations and those of its related agencies; secondly, between the intergovernmental committees; and thirdly, in the field of financial arrangements.

Japan, whose people have traditionally sought to live in harmony with nature, is determined to contribute in many ways, and to the best of its ability, to the successful convening of the 1992 conference, for it is acutely aware that we must nurture, without delay and with firm resolve, a sense of patriotism for the earth. The very survival of mankind surely depends on it.

Mr. TAIANA (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): We are discussing today the holding in 1992 - 20 years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm - of a United Nations conference on environment and development.

This discussion is taking place in a climate of general satisfaction at the strengthening of the United Nations. There is a new atmosphere of détente, which has made it possible for the Organization to focus its attention on issues other than peace-keeping and international security, which are, of course, of fundamental importance. Indeed, there can be no doubt that peace-keeping and international security play a priority part in the struggle to preserve the environment. Today's discussion therefore reflects the deeply felt concern of the international community. Accordingly, I am honoured to be able to address this forum to set

(Mr. Taiana, Argentina)

forth the position that my Government takes on a set of problems of such vital importance to humankind.

Everyone is aware of the magnitude of the ecological dangers that loom over us and invade every nook and cranny of this planet. In the atmosphere, there is the possibility of profound climatic change. This is reflected in the depletion of the ozone layer and in acid rain. So far as the waters are concerned, we see growing pollution of the rivers, lakes, coastal areas and the oceans themselves. On land, we have seen desertification, deforestation, the destruction of biological diversity caused by the dumping of hazardous wastes, the use of toxic chemical products, and a whole host of problems involving biotechnology and deterioration of the environment that go hand in hand with poverty.

Designing strategies to come up with solutions to these problems will be a genuine challenge to the Organization over the next decade. As President Menem said to the General Assembly,

"Today, to defend what is ours we must be aware of everyone's world. What was a humanitarian option yesterday is now an imperative. We feel that we are all united in the face of great world problems that require co-operation and responses in a spirit of solidarity.

"There is only one world. There is only one human dignity."

(A/44/PV.5, p. 27)

(Mr. Taiana, Argentina)

The United Nations was set up to maintain international peace and security and, through international economic and social co-operation, to bring about a better quality of life for all. Those aspects are part of the international commonweal. A fundamental element in the attainment and consolidation of that common heritage is the preservation of the environment. That issue has progressively extended beyond national boundaries, requiring shared understanding and co-ordination at the international level and a growing effort at co-operation and solidarity in all areas.

Until this century, humanity had passively witnessed changes in the environment. Only now has human activity begun to influence those processes that were once beyond our grasp or our power to affect. Man's notable technological strides have made him chiefly responsible for changes in the ecosystem. The problems of the environment we face today are unwanted by-products of the processes of industrialization that go hand in hand with technological progress.

Hence it is our inescapable responsibility today to find ways and means of preserving the environment for generations to come.

In this context Argentina has committed itself to achieving a better quality of life for its people, as it seeks to bring about regional understandings as well as international action in this area.

We cannot fail to mention that our country, because of its geographical location, is exposed to real and potential dangers as a result of the deterioration of the environment beyond its borders. Eloquent proof is the depletion of the ozone layer in the Antarctic, essentially triggered by industrial activities in the northern Hemisphere, resulting in an adverse impact on significant parts of Argentine territory.

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Also, as a developing country, we face the same difficulties as those of the overwhelming majority of the Members of the Organization as we seek compatibility between environmentally appropriate growth and our potential for development.

In this connection, we agree with the Brundtland report, as follows:

"Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable - to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development does imply limits - not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth." (A/42/427, p. 24).

One must also mention that the search for appropriate solutions often requires the kind of scientific know-how and resources that are simply not within the reach of the developing world. In this regard, the external indebtedness that is having such an adverse impact on our economies is itself a serious obstacle in the struggle to preserve the ecology, a struggle to which we are fully committed.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, and aware of the dangers looming over us, Argentina is determined to play a leading role in any international action in this area. In this respect, we note the particular relevance of the United Nations conference on environment and development, to be held on the twentieth anniversary of the historic Stockholm gathering, which was a milestone with regard to the consideration of environmental issues on the international level. It led to the United Nations Environment Programme, which has been resolutely working for all these years, and of whose Governing Council we have been a member at various times. As a result of work done in other specialized agencies throughout the United Nations system and the steps taken by Governments at the national and

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regional levels, an awareness of environmental matters that simply did not exist in 1972 has become firstly established.

The dimension environmental problems have taken today indicates that we are at a turning-point: an essential aspect that must be analysed is the relation between environment and development.

To achieve a harmonious relationship between them, we must avoid certain approaches that may lead to disputes. Development does not supersede protection of the environment, nor does protection of the environment supersede development: each must reinforce the other, and we must create conditions that will foster an equitable balance. To do so, we shall need additional financial resources for co-operation in environmental matters, free access to scientific know-how and alternative non-polluting technology on a non-commercial basis.

Hence emphasis has quite rightly been placed on the need to enjoy the kind of international economic climate in support of lasting and stable growth, particularly in developing countries, and facilitating appropriate management of the environment.

The developing countries are the least responsible for the world-wide pollution of the environment; it is thus necessary for the developed countries to shoulder their greater responsibility and foster growing co-operation in this field.

The holding of the conference on environment and development in 1992 requires that we all work closely together. That is why we pledge the greatest possible effort to attain its goals. Major strides have been made in preparing for the conference, the most noteworthy being General Assembly resolution 43/196, which my country co-sponsored, as well as decision 15/3 adopted this year by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. Both texts have served to lay

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the necessary foundation for those agreements the General Assembly still has to hammer out.

In this respect, it is necessary to set guidelines for protecting the environment through the implementation of basic preventive measures such as would take into account the actual needs faced by developing countries. There will also have to be established a relation between national, regional and world-wide activity, with a view to achieving formal agreements stipulating specific measures to make sure that environmental issues become part and parcel of development processes.

With regard to the preparatory work, it would be appropriate for us to have the widest possible participation of all Governments concerned. At the same time, we favour making use of existing institutions and agencies, with a view to avoiding needless duplication and thus achieving appropriate representativeness.

Another issue of concern to us involves the costs of organizing the conference. In this regard, as a logical concomitant of the prime responsibility of the industrialized countries with regard to ecological problems, we feel that they should bear the bulk of the financial burden.

As to the venue, we reiterate our support for the invitation issued by the Brazilian Government to host the Conference in 1992.

(Mr. Taiana, Argentina)

The holding of the meeting in that neighbouring country would for us be a reaffirmation of the importance that we developing countries give to environmental problems.

My country played an active part in the Stockholm Conference of 1972, and in the 20 years since then we have maintained our keen interest in environmental issues on the national, regional and international levels. In the United Nations forum we have sponsored, with others, General Assembly resolutions on the subject.

It will surprise no one, therefore, that through my statement we are once again renewing our commitment to environmental issues and declaring ourselves ready to co-operate with the rest of the international community to make the 1992 Conference a success. As we have said before, the environment is the great challenge facing us today, which we can meet successfully only by our joint efforts in this new phase of international co-operation.

Mr. SCHLEGEL (German Democratic Republic): The German Democratic Republic is in favour of the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development at a high political level. We reaffirm our support for Brazil's offer to host the 1992 conference. We expect of the conference a constructive dialogue on basic strategic questions concerning the conservation of man's natural environment. Therefore, responsible decisions are required which should serve as guidelines for international co-operation to the end of this century and beyond.

The conservation and protection of the human environment are elementary conditions for ensuring security and peace, for growth and development and for prosperity and well-being. Thus they are of vital importance for the existence of mankind. Even if there are different views on the priorities, objectives and scope of concrete measures, there is agreement on the fact that the global environmental

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issue requires global efforts also to solve it. Only through common efforts can the continued existence of our planet be ensured for future generations.

The German Democratic Republic speaks for the elimination of the causes leading to the deterioration of the environment. A decisive prerequisite for successful environmental policies consists in countering the arms build-up. Peace and environment are interrelated to a decisive extent. In the long run disarmament must release the resources that are needed for the costly protection of the environment. It is by no means premature even now to address more emphatically the problems of converting armament industries into production sites for civilian use, not least production that serves conservation of the environment.

The German Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the further development of co-operation in protection of the environment within the framework of the United Nations system and in other multilateral forums. We hold the view that the bodies existing at present within the framework of the United Nations are well suited to making decisive contributions towards finding ways and means of addressing pressing environmental problems. Full use should be made of all possibilities of enhancing the effectiveness of those forums. In this context, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has a key position owing to its co-ordinating, catalytic, conceptual and codifying role. Proceeding from what has been achieved so far, thought should be given to whether the present structures, functions and tasks of the forums will meet the growing demands of the 1990s. To this end numerous suggestions have been made which deserve thorough consideration, but there is also a clear view and realism as to what is being sought.

At its session in Nairobi the Governing Council of UNEP contributed significantly to the long-term preparation for the conference on environment and

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Democratic Republic)

development. Governing Council decision 15/3, which was adopted after complicated negotiations, contains valid guidelines relating to content and to organizational matters. We should remember that it was a consensus package. In terms of content, the priorities set in Nairobi showed the right way. More detailed ideas taking account of the specific interests of groups should be elaborated in the further process of preparation and subsequently at the conference.

In our view, efforts should be made to prepare a realistic work programme for the conference, which should focus on priority questions. Attention should centre on secure ecological development through peace, disarmament, development and co-operation. What are needed are economic strategies which include environmental aspects. Likewise, problems of science and technology in the field of environmental protection and new requirements regarding environment education should become part of this work.

Intensified activity on such crucial issues as protection of the climate and the ozone layer, protection of biological diversity, protection of waters, in particular fresh-water resources, and environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals can brook no further delay.

The role of the United Nations and its organs, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, in analysing environmental problems and setting ecological targets at the global or regional level, must be determined. Further international regulations relating to environmental protection must be formulated.

However, it would certainly be unrealistic to expect the conference to give definite and valid answers to all environmental questions. Therefore, the main task is to determine the strategy for international co-operation in the area of environment to the turn of the century and to set substantive priorities.

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Democratic Republic)

In the preparations procedural and organizational aspects should not overlap the matters of content. Even if there are certain arguments in favour of Geneva as the seat of the preparatory committee, New York would be acceptable too. The aspect of development might best be covered here. Anyway, what matters is that full use be made of the expertise UNEP is able to bring to the preparation process.

The wide range of national, regional or interregional activities is of great importance for the debate on environment and thus has a direct or indirect influence on the conference scheduled for 1992. This is true both of the conference of States members of the Economic Commission for Europe on action for a common future, to be held in Bergen, Norway, in May 1990, and of similar regional conferences in implementation of the Brundtland report.

The complex approach to the global environmental problem in that report and in the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond is an example for future international action. What is needed is a different understanding of security. The interrelationship of development and environment must be taken into account. Without a supportive international economic environment there can be no sustainable growth and no environmentally sound development in all States.

(Mr. Schlegel, German Democratic Republic)

The demand made in the Final Declaration adopted by the non-aligned countries at their ninth summit conference for decisive policies designed to conserve the natural environment and maintain the ecological balance goes right to the crux of the matter. Environmental aspects must be reflected in national plans, priorities and objectives related to development. They imply responsibility for one's neighbour. However, the formula cannot be that assistance services are made hostage to conditions for environmental protection. Such conditions are no recipe for sustainable co-operation.

Europe, as a continent with highly developed industries, has to face very specific questions of environmental protection. The present follow-up meeting in Sofia of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) is expected to offer a valid response to that concern. There cannot be any doubt that constructive co-operation in conserving the environment can also stabilize the political climate.

Present scientific findings indicate that world-wide co-operation is of particular importance for the protection of the global climate. Resolution 43/53, adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-third session and entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", has proved to be abreast of the times.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is doing a great deal of work. With the establishment of the IPCC, we have a competent forum for the examination of this problem in a realistic and effective manner and the working out of strategies on how to proceed. Its activity deserves further support. The second world climate conference, which is to be held in 1990 and the preparations for which have been made by the World Meteorological Organization with the collaboration of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United

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Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), will consider the report of the IPCC on a broad scale and will discuss international co-operation in the protection of the global climate. It will also offer fresh ideas for 1992.

The German Democratic Republic will strive to make an active contribution to the 1992 conference. In the debate we shall contribute our national experience gained in the conservation, shaping and protection of our country's environment. Environmental protection is an integral part of national economic development. Much is being done to keep forests green, rivers and lakes pure, and the air clean. However, the results are not yet satisfactory. As a country that uses lignite as its main energy and raw-material source - a source which is environmentally not too sound - we are faced with difficult problems. We are all well aware that environmental protection is expensive. Thus, not all the long-term ecological requirements, from the economic point of view, can be fully met now. Last March a national conference on "Peace, environment and development" was held in the capital of the German Democratic Republic and dealt with the country's environmental policies. Environmental issues are very closely linked with the economic and social policies of my country.

Another important premise is our participation in international co-operation in the field of environment. My country is a party to 34 international agreements and conventions. At the bilateral level it has concluded 36 agreements, which it is consistently implementing.

The German Democratic Republic shares the view that given the political will mankind possesses all the potential necessary for resolving to halt any further deterioration of the environment. All we have to do is make full use of it. The 1992 conference on environment and development offers a good chance for that.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to discuss the planned United Nations conference on environment and development in the plenary General Assembly because we believe that this undertaking - after the necessary careful preparation - will constitute an important factor and, it is to be hoped, send out a far-reaching signal to improve international co-operation in the environmental field. Let me point out in this context that last year's General Assembly resolution 43/196, which was co-sponsored by Austria, and decision 15/3 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) present us, in our view, with a valuable framework for the preparation, organizational structure, objectives and content of the conference. We look forward to a fruitful discussion and the adoption of a consensus resolution on this topic during this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Such a resolution should, inter alia, take a clear decision on the organization of the conference in 1992, its scope and the immediate launching of its preparatory process.

We have noted with pleasure the support at the recent non-aligned summit conference for the candidacy of Brazil to serve as host to this United Nations conference, and we should like to thank Brazil for the invitation. Austria will gladly support any decision to that effect.

The preparation of the conference must be fully commensurate with the seriousness of the issues involved. In accordance with decision 15/3 of UNEP's Governing Council, we therefore believe that there exists an urgent need to strengthen that Governing Council and its catalytic role as the preparatory committee of the conference. Owing to the necessity to begin the preparatory process as soon as possible, a conference secretariat ought to be set up in Geneva in the near future; it should be responsible, in close co-operation with the Executive Director of UNEP, for the organization and co-ordination of national, regional and international preparatory work and activities.

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In our opinion, the 1992 conference will neither be an exclusive development conference nor a conference dealing solely with issues like environmental conservation or environmental technology. My delegation holds the view that the title of last year's General Assembly resolution, "United Nations conference on environment and development", highlights the thrust - namely, the relationship between man and society, on the one hand, and our environmental resource systems, on the other. We therefore have to choose a balanced approach to deal with this obvious but complex relationship in order to put the conference to its best possible use.

Diverse proposals and ideas which have been ventilated in the recent past, and in particular during the general debate this year in the General Assembly, confront us with an array of institutional and political options aimed at improving the existing framework and mechanisms for environmental decision-making and co-operation. They clearly highlight the fact that the issue of environment and development has become one of mankind's major challenges for the next decades. With a view to the desirable alleviation of the preparatory process of the 1992 conference, it might be useful if these proposals could be collected in a compendium and delivered to the organ entrusted with the preparation of this undertaking.

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These proposals also indicate the increasing awareness that the international community has to face up to the growing scarcity of environmental resources. Furthermore, the use of those ever-diminishing resources brings about competitive relationships between the diverse users and thereby the potential for conflict and disputes. Let me refer in this context to the Harvard sociologist Carl Wildfogel, who has made a brilliant analysis of the development of the "hydraulic societies" of the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris, Indus and Yellow River valleys. He points out that those societies, in coping with a precarious state of resource scarcity, developed institutional structures to deal with the need for improved and extended resource use.

My delegation believes that the question of institutional development as well as the issue of coping with financial requirements should be taken up as central themes during the conference. The importance of these themes has been underlined by various delegations and we would like to recall here recent initiatives by, inter alia, the Soviet Union, New Zealand and India, as well as The Hague Declaration. My country, Austria, has also put forward a number of proposals in this context, such as the establishment of an international environment fund, suggested during the recent Helsinki meeting of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, and the drawing up of an international environment charter as well as the establishment of an environmental peace-keeping system.

Let me elaborate on the Austrian proposal for an environmental peace-keeping system. My delegation holds the view that appropriate dispute prevention and settlement, including new forms of environment-related fact-finding through the United Nations, will become indispensable with the aforementioned competitiveness in the economic use of transnational environmental resources. Therefore we believe

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that a system of environmental dispute settlement and prevention or investigation into certain environmental situations should be created. Such a system could consist of a register of environmental fact-finding experts established within UNEP. Panels of those technical experts would become active at the request either of countries involved in a situation which could lead to a dispute or of countries already party to a dispute. In cases in which environmental situations, in the opinion of the Secretary-General could either threaten the maintenance of international peace and security or the preservation of the global commons, such fact-finding missions could also be initiated by the Secretary-General.

These panels would conduct on-site fact-finding and present a report containing their findings and recommendations for action. In the same way as in traditional peace-keeping procedures, the consent of the parties concerned would form an essential element for the deployment of those missions. Austria believes that such environmental fact-finding could constitute a first step in the direction of rational dispute prevention and settlement on the basis of objective evidence and informed expert opinion.

The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, with its focus on the interdependence of environment and development, has clearly constituted an important factor in raising the level of awareness of the steady deterioration of our environment. It also provides us with a valuable conceptual framework both for national policies and for future steps on the international plane. We agree with the Brundtland report's thrust that there is an urgent need to embark on policies leading to long-term sustainable and environmentally sound development, in order to prevent a further erosion of our common future. The concept of sustainable development, which we fully support, should be one of the central pillars of the conference's deliberations.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Another important task of the conference will be to arrive at a better understanding of the economic dimension in the relationship between man and environment. We believe that the concept of the environment as an economic resource needs further elaboration and discussion.

Overall, any elaboration of multidisciplinary strategies for the achievement of sustainable development ought to take into account the necessity for long-term environmental management, the improvement of the socio-economic situation of developing countries and the tackling of the consequences of population growth.

Environmental issues transcend all levels and all sectors of human and societal activities. Any national, regional or global programme concerning the environment will depend for its success on the co-operation of a multiplicity of public and private actors. For the first time the survival of this planet is threatened not only by the one-time application of the destructive overkill capacities of a few single actors but also by the continuous action of every human being. We therefore believe that the issue of environment and development must be put on a broad basis both in the preparatory stage and in the follow-up to the conference. We also believe that environmental education, in particular, aimed at inducing improvements in environmental awareness and behaviour is a pre-condition of handling effectively these issues in our democratic political processes.

The inclusion of a broad variety of actors therefore seems a necessary means to increase the impact of the conference and facilitate its follow-up work. Non-governmental organizations and parliamentarians ought to be included. Furthermore, understanding of environmental resource systems as a basic input to all human production of commodities would also necessitate the participation of economic representatives, inter alia, from the fields of energy, industry, transport and agriculture.

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Finally, we also consider science and technology to be a decisive factor in raising the level of environmental resource use and achieving optimal management results in the environmental field. I quote in this context Sadruddin Aga Khan:

"Ecological equilibrium in the fields of soil, water and forest conservation, of energy dissipation or pollution, of genetic erosion in the plant and animal kingdoms, of climatic changes, is vital to global security, and demands a new approach. Scientists will increasingly need to contribute towards the elaboration of social and political policies which seek to control those processes which threaten our future. Where our wisdom is inadequate for our knowledge, we must seek to redress the balance. The planet and not the nation state should be our focus."

Therefore the process of dealing with the issue of environment and development and the 1992 conference must include the scientific and technological community in some prominent way.

One possible way to incorporate this variety of important actors in the process could be the organization - in addition to the intergovernmental conference at the highest level - of three parallel events. These accompanying events should be in the form of forums or symposiums and could consist of a forum of non-governmental organizations and parliamentarians, an economic forum and a symposium on environmental science and technology. They could be organized by intergovernmental and/or non-governmental international organizations in co-ordination with the work of the preparatory committee and the conference secretariat.

We are standing at a point in our history at which the urgent need to take technical, legislative and political steps to achieve better administration and management of our ecological affairs is evident. We sincerely hope that the United

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Nations conference on environment and development will open up the necessary paths and serve as a long-term launching-pad for ecologically sound development, improved multilateral co-operation and reversal of the diverse processes of environmental degradation. The challenge seems enormous but the potential consequences for present and future generations of success, namely, the guarantee of our common future, ought to be enticing and rewarding enough to warrant decisive action.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): We are meeting in plenary Assembly today to consider an event, the proposed 1992 conference on environment and development, that, given co-operative effort, should prove to be a momentous experience in this field. The report of the Secretary-General (A/44/256 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2) have given us useful information and the views of Member States on the various aspects of the conference. The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provided valuable suggestions through its decision 15/3. and the Economic and Social Council, which discussed the question, adopted resolution 1989/87, by which the UNEP Governing Council's decision, together with views of Member States, was transmitted to this session of the General Assembly for appropriate action.

My delegation welcomes the atmosphere in which the issue of environment is being discussed. We attach the utmost importance to the need to keep environment a subject of global co-operative study and action. Environmental degradation has transnational repercussions; hence environmental protection, in positive contrast, should bring benefits for all. In fact, partial environmental protection is no protection.

Alongside this is the inescapable question how such protection is to be organized. We do not, as someone stated in this context, ask a starving man to mind his cholesterol levels. The environment can be protected provided the means to do so are made available to those that do not have them.

Another important aspect is the nature of the problem we are addressing or going to address. At the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, the former Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi stated:

"We do not wish to impoverish the environment any further and yet we cannot for a moment forget the grim poverty of large numbers of people. Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters? For instance, unless we are in a

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position to provide employment and purchasing power for the daily necessities of the tribal people and those who live in and around our jungles, we cannot prevent them from combing the forest for food and livelihood, from poaching and despoiling the vegetation. When they themselves feel deprived, how can we urge the preservation of animals? How can we speak to those who live in villages and in slums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and the air clean when their own lives are contaminated at the source? The environment cannot be improved in conditions of poverty. Nor can poverty be eradicated without the use of science and technology."

Those words, which recognized the crucial link between environment and development, are truer today than ever before.

Flowing from the aforementioned it follows that the proposed conference should not focus only on technical questions relating to the environment, although these are important in themselves. The developmental dimension needs to be underscored as well. The two are in many ways facets of the same coin. It may not be productive at this stage of our discussions to engage in controversies on whether the conference should focus on environment in the developmental context or vice versa, for the two are inseparably interlinked. The developing countries in particular cannot view environment as divorced from the developmental process; it must be viewed as an integral part of the latter. Nor should the developed world, we feel, sever development from its environmental dimension.

Be that as it may, further refinement on the interlinkages or the relative degree of emphasis to be given to one or the other aspect could be left to the preparatory process itself. I should like at this stage to express my hope that environment will continue to be an area of consensus, a unifying concern, in the discussions here in the General Assembly. We should avoid making it appear as though environment and development were mutually exclusive. Let us work for global

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agreement on both so that the benefits created have universal rather than selective application. The latter would only erode the results achieved.

Decisions on environmental protection at the global level should be made within the universal framework of the United Nations. The concerns of all - I repeat, all - need to be addressed adequately in any such global endeavour, not only because they are legitimate but also because not addressing them would leave a large and potentially disastrous lacuna in whatever environmental safeguards the conference might agree on. Hence international measures to deal with the problem should lead neither to a freeze on development and progress at the present unequal and iniquitous levels, nor indeed to half-hearted efforts at safeguarding our endangered planet.

The developing countries, it is obvious, have far less capacity to deal with problems of environmental degradation on account of the state of their poverty and underdevelopment. Added to this is the fact that their responsibility for the present state of global environmental degradation is clearly far less than that of the developed countries. This has been clearly recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/196, adopted last year by consensus. Consequently it is only fair that developing countries should not be called upon to undertake a dual burden: that of development - an enormous responsibility in itself - and that of meeting stringent environmental prescriptions for whose fulfilment they do not have the resources and whose formulation has not taken their basic concerns into account. In any convention or agreement on the various facets of environmental protection it is necessary to ensure that the obligations and commitments of Member States are commensurate with both their responsibility and their capacity. This is the only way of ensuring that global solutions to environmental problems will be equitable, symmetrical and the result of truly co-operative efforts.

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The Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session, adopted by consensus a welcome decision, resolution 1989/101, on the provision of additional - I stress, additional - financial resources to developing countries for strengthening international co-operation on environment. It recognized that new and additional financial resources need to be provided to developing countries for environmental programmes and projects to ensure that their development priorities are not adversely affected. The preparatory process for the 1992 conference should consider the question carefully so that the conference itself can establish mechanisms for effective and continuous monitoring of the provision of such new and additional resources.

Another area of crucial importance is that of development and transfer of environmentally safe technologies. If developing countries are to join in the universal campaign against environmental degradation, they have to bypass technologies that have caused cumulative damage to the environment.

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For this, they must be enabled to leap-frog to the new technologies that are environment-friendly. More than 90 per cent of the manufacture and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons, which pose a serious danger to the ozone layer, is in the developed countries. The per capita annual consumption in some of these countries is more than 1 kilogram. The per capita annual consumption in most of the developing countries is less than 0.005 kilogram. Substitutes being developed are going to prove highly expensive. Chemical giants of the developed world are now spending hundreds of millions of dollars to develop such substitutes. These substitutes themselves may turn out to be costlier than the CFCs and halons. In addition, the modifications necessary in the equipment which uses these chemicals also have enormous cost implications. Conservation and recycling can reduce demand for the CFCs, but here again the technology as well as the modifications necessary to the equipment will be prohibitively expensive. The costs involved are thus truly gigantic.

We cannot ignore the cost and technology availability aspect. We know that environmentally sound technologies are being developed, and we hope that they will be available to all for this worldwide endeavour. Let me assure the Assembly that developing countries like mine stand ready to participate in the global endeavour to develop environmentally sound alternative technologies. We in India have done considerable work in developing such technologies, for example, in solar energy. We look forward to the developed world responding to our co-operative urge by providing us with the tools for such co-operation, namely, by sharing new technologies.

It is with these considerations in mind that my Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, proposed, at the ninth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade in September this year, the creation of a planet protection fund.

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The proposal, which has received wide attention and support, envisages a fund to which all countries, developed and developing, will contribute, except the least developed countries. The fund will be used to finance the research, development and acquisition of conservation-compatible technologies in critical areas, which can then be brought into the public domain for the benefit of both developed and developing countries. In our view, such a fund, which will bring developed and developing countries together in an active partnership, will be a concrete, tangible expression of our common endeavour to protect the environment. The method or rate of contribution can be agreed upon through consultations. My Prime Minister has suggested one possible formula. Another possible formula is the one suggested in informal consultations by our Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, Mr. Blanca, and, to quote him, his formula is: "From each according to his means, to each according to his needs". I am taking the liberty of circulating the relevant extracts from the speech of my Prime Minister at the Non-Aligned Summit in Belgrade. My delegation trusts the General Assembly will lend its weight to this proposal.

Let me now turn to the organizational aspects of the 1992 conference. India was among the first to welcome the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Conference, and has already supported it in the forums of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. I should like to make a few comments about the preparatory process leading up to the 1992 conference, taking into account the manifold aspects of the environment issue and its inextricable interrelationship with the development process. My delegation does not approach this matter from any preconceived notion; rather, we keep before us certain criteria which should be satisfied while deciding this procedural question, which has substantive implications. The first requirement is that every Member of the United Nations

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should be in a position to participate actively and effectively in the preparatory process. This means that the preparatory mechanism should be located at a place where the maximum number of countries have resident missions.

Another consideration is that all - I repeat, all - the countries should have the opportunity and the right to participate in the preparatory mechanism. This suggests a committee of the whole. Also, a committee of the whole would enable us to do fuller and greater justice to the complex and wide-ranging issues which will have to be addressed during the preparatory process. Furthermore, it will be essential for delegations to remain in continuous contact, both formally and informally, throughout this process. They would thus be able to exchange views and explore possible approaches informally, in between formal meetings of the preparatory committee of the whole. The preparatory work cannot and should not be of an episodic nature, confined to formal meetings. Indeed, the success of the formal meetings can be ensured only if there is a regular and continuous cross-fertilization of ideas in between the formal meetings.

There is yet another aspect. The preparatory work will inevitably involve questions extending to areas lying outside the strictly technical aspects of environmental issues. They will be connected inescapably with question of, among others, durable and sustained growth and development, social welfare, legal issues and even the financial and budgetary position of the United Nations. Some idea of the interconnections between environment and other questions figuring prominently in the United Nations agenda can be had by a mere glance at the chapter headings of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Delegations will require a range of expertise to deal with these issues in an integrated fashion. For most if not all delegations, this range of expertise is available in the required measure only at United Nations Headquarters.

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All these considerations strongly suggest that the preparatory mechanism should be a committee of the whole of the General Assembly based in New York. No doubt, subject to availability of financial resources, the committee's meetings can be held in a number of places, with the added objective of raising public awareness of the environment and development issues in various parts of the world. The United Nations Environment Programme, under the able and dynamic leadership of its Executive Director, Mr. Mostafa Tolba, will naturally be intimately associated with the preparatory process in all its stages.

There seems to be near unanimity that the conference should be held in 1992. It would, happily, coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference. My delegation wholeheartedly supports this. Let us, however, remind ourselves that the successful completion of the preparatory work in time for 1992 will depend on the availability of funds, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his report. This related question should receive serious consideration at the present session.

My delegation stands ready to participate in the discussions and consultations on this question at the current session of the General Assembly and will approach the various issues from the perspective outlined by me.

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil): The decision we shall shortly be taking at the current session of the General Assembly to convene a United Nations conference on environment and development will certainly constitute a major step in the organization of the international community's response to the fundamental question of environmental degradation at the world level. The problem is so serious that it does not call for a fragmented approach; still less does it call for the responsibility for indicating solutions to be assumed by a limited number of States as self-appointed guardians of the planet. There is clearly a need for a global and integrated assessment of the problem, to be followed by an equally global and integrated response to the many challenges with which all States, big or small, seem to be faced. For such an exercise to be conducted in a useful and orderly manner, the universal forum of the United Nations is undoubtedly the most appropriate framework for what may be one of the most important common endeavours to be undertaken by the international community. And surely the United Nations, through its existing institutions or through new ones, will be convoked to assume a large share of responsibility in the implementation of many decisions to be adopted by the 1992 conference.

If the United Nations conference on environment and development is to prove successful, it will have by necessity to approach the question of environmental degradation from a world-wide perspective. The conference should be used as a unique opportunity to deal with the central issue of the global threats to the environment coming from the patterns of production and consumption in the industrial societies, particularly as regards energy products. The conference should thus not be seen as a North-South exercise through which the United Nations could be used in the main as an instrument for the developed countries to influence the development policies of the developing ones, as if the poorer countries constituted the most important and imminent threat to the world environment.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

Environmental degradation in the developing world is essentially a problem of local dimensions. Seldom can we speak in that connection of transboundary environmental effects, especially of a global nature. Environmental problems in those countries are, generally speaking, a direct consequence in most cases of the absence of development itself. Developing countries surely have no interest in inflicting damage on their own environment. Their indigenous efforts to protect the environment should be supported by any assistance, technical or financial, compatible with their development aspirations. In fact, underdevelopment being at the root of their environment problems, the reversal of the net outflow of resources from the developing to the developed countries would certainly be the most significant contribution that could be made to third-world countries to enable them to preserve their respective environments.

Much has been said - and this is one of the messages that the poorer nations most frequently get from the richer ones - about our living in an interdependent world as far as finance and trade are concerned. Developing countries are told that by accepting full integration in those global markets they would surely stand to gain in terms of economic development, even if at the cost of their sovereignty. The glaring asymmetries between developing and developed nations, however, make it a hard proposition to accept in a world where the most powerful countries are less and less inclined to subordinate even a modest part of their national autonomy in the formulation and implementation of economic policy to any sort of international discipline.

In the case of the environment, we appear to have a new opportunity to regulate international relations on the basis of an effectively accepted premise of interdependence. We seem, in that connection, to be confronted with a clear global threat, to which nothing short of a global response may suffice. A new mode of international relations effectively based on solidarity should be developed to cope

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

with the threat to the global environment. If solidarity is to prevail, nations will have to assume full responsibility for the transboundary environmental impact of their actions once universally agreed standards can be established. However, such a new mode of international relations cannot and should not be narrowed to the exchanges between the developed and the developing countries. It cannot and should not be based on the strange notion that only the economic development of developing countries must be put to the test of environmental sustainability. It would be politically naive and certainly morally unsustainable to expect only the poorer countries to use natural resources in a manner in which the ecological balance is not affected and natural resources are not depleted. To have any meaning, the concept of environmental sustainability must first be tested against the patterns of production and consumption of the already industrialized societies. That is particularly true as regards energy products. The consumption of energy products is, on the one hand, by far the main source of global environmental degradation and, on the other hand, is taking place in the industrialized North at disproportionately high levels that do not take into account the physical or economic availability of those products.

The environmental interdependence of the world will not be served by narrowing the approach to the global ecological threat with which we appear to be faced to control the economic development and the demographic growth of developing countries. The United Nations and the international financial agencies will indeed be gravely and negatively affected if they allow themselves to be used for the selfish purposes of those who seem to wish to safeguard at any cost their more than comfortable levels of welfare. The clarification of the concept of environmentally sustainable development could well be one of the major outcomes of the 1992 conference.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

The cross-sectoral nature of the theme of the 1992 conference will require contributions to the preparatory process from all competent agencies, inside and outside the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, and from social agents like non-governmental organizations, trade unions and enterprises, among others. Those contributions should be made available to the preparatory committee through the independent conference secretariat to be established by the Secretary-General.

Moreover, owing to its complexity, the negotiating process should be concentrated in the preparatory committee in order to ensure an integrated approach to the various issues at stake. That would ensure that the committee would operate as a genuine universal forum, a focal point for the preparation of the conference. To meet that requirement the preparatory committee and the secretariat should be located in a place allowing for the full participation of all countries - which of course points to United Nations Headquarters. We believe that the results reached at international conferences and meetings concerning the issues to be dealt with by the 1992 conference should be made available to the preparatory committee. If that were done, that committee would be in a position to work out consistent recommendations for the conference. In that context, the role of the secretariat will be vital, particularly in co-ordinating the contributions of various international agencies and in commissioning studies that may be requested by the preparatory committee for the best fulfilment of its mandate. The complexity of the negotiations and the need for careful preparation of the conference will demand a Bureau that is sufficiently representative to steer the preparatory committee effectively.

The United Nations conference on environment and development will be a unique opportunity for the international community to carry on an in-depth assessment of

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

the problems relating to environment and development and to hammer out specific recommendations to solve those problems. Brazil will be honoured to host that important event. We are very grateful to all the countries that have endorsed our candidacy to date. We were very pleased to hear today that the Nordic countries and the member States of the European communities as well as the Soviet Union, China, Austria and the Democratic Republic of Germany, among others, are also in a position to support our offer.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

The endorsement of our candidacy by the Heads of State or Government of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the support we have received from the Group of 77 reinforce our belief that hosting the conference will enable us to contribute directly to sharpening the world perception of environmental problems and to work together with the international community to find adequate responses to the challenges that confront us all.

Mr. PAOLILLO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Since 1972, when the international community first took co-ordinated action to deal with the growing deterioration of the environment, much has happened in this field and we have learned a great deal. We have a better understanding of the nature and magnitude of the many aspects of the phenomenon of ecological degradation; we have a more precise idea of its lethal consequences for the well-being, if not the very survival survival, of mankind; and we have identified a number of ways in which to defend the environment against the assaults upon it. There can be no doubt that we are better prepared today than we were 20 years ago to defend the environment's integrity, but it is also true that some of the old ecological dangers have grown worse and new ones have appeared, dangers which if not overcome will lead us to a catastrophe with unforeseeable consequences.

Therefore, in the light of the new circumstances, the time has come for the international community to make a second concerted effort to rescue the planet and the space surrounding it from imminent disaster.

The conference on environment and development, which is to be held in 1992 - in Brazil, we hope - is a key element in this new effort at co-operation and solidarity, without prejudice to any activities already begun or yet to be begun and which must continue to develop. The conference will be an opportunity for

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Governments to meet to update and complete the work done in Stockholm in the light of the changes that have taken place in the past two decades. Governments will be able to examine every aspect of the world's present ecological situation, the areas in which the environment has suffered the worst attacks, the origin of those attacks, their consequences for the life of the planet and its inhabitants, and future trends. On the basis of that review States will have to take decisions to regulate human activity, with the aim of halting the process of ecological deterioration and ensuring the preservation of our habitat.

It is clear that the international community has an enormous and difficult task which we must now get down to tackling. After all, we are scarcely two years from the beginning of the conference. That is not long, bearing in mind that in the interim we shall have to resolve such complex questions as the scope and objectives of the conference, prepare all the documentation and informative material and tackle other major policy and organizational issues. The decisions on those matters taken by the Assembly and the body responsible for the preparatory work will be crucial to the the success of the conference. The Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), among other bodies, have already made valuable contributions towards the taking of those decisions.

I should now like to explain briefly our views on some of the principles that we believe should guide our future work.

First, the main purpose of the conference should be to adopt specific principles and recommendations, as well as practical measures, to provide States with the foundation for action to protect the environment, whether unilaterally or in co-operation with other States. It would seem sensible to guide the work of the conference and the preparatory committee by drawing up a selective list of the items that should receive the greatest attention, such as the list proposed in the annex to decision 15/3 of UNEP's Governing Council, which Uruguay regards as a

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sound basis for deciding the conference's scope. The list includes some of the matters of greatest concern to Uruguay, such as climate changes, global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, transboundary atmospheric pollution and protection of fresh-water resources, the oceans and the coastal areas, and their resources. In any event, whatever list of issues is agreed, it will have to be merely indicative, not exhaustive, so that it will not prevent the conference or the preparatory committee from considering any matter not now foreseen that may arise in the future as a matter of importance.

Secondly, to ensure that the conference's resolutions are implemented it will have to be organized on the basis of the participation on an equal footing of all States. That also applies to the preparatory stages of the organization of the conference. Uruguay believes that the body set up to do the preparatory work should be made up of the States Members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency and should be responsible for taking all the policy decisions concerning the holding of the conference and keeping the General Assembly informed of these.

Thirdly, the conference will need complete, up-to-date and precise information on the world ecological situation and its future evolution. The preparation of all the material and documentation will require the participation not only of the States Members, bodies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and other competent intergovernmental bodies, but also of academic and scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, industrial associations and, generally, all bodies that in one way or another are involved in promoting environmentally sound sustainable development.

Fourthly, the conference will have to take into account the progress made in recent decades in knowledge of social and economic factors and their

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interrelationship. Because of that knowledge we are already aware that the development of the developing countries and the conservation of the environment are intimately linked and that it would be a great mistake to try to solve the ecological crisis without paying due attention to the economic and social problems of the developing countries. Protection of the environment should be seen not as something unrelated to the economic and social development of the developing countries, but as an integral part of it. The work of the conference and its outcome must reflect this close relationship, as indicated, indeed, by the name proposed for the conference.

Fifthly, this concept of the integrated nature of environmental and development problems should also influence the allocation of responsibilities and tasks in the implementation of the strategy decided upon for the conservation of the environment. The economies of the industrialized countries, with the models of industrialization and patterns of consumption that they create, produce pollution and lead to over-exploitation of scarce natural resources. On the other hand, underdevelopment and poverty also have a negative impact on the environment through the inappropriate use of scarce natural resources resulting from lack of financial and technological means. Therefore, the causes of environmental degradation may essentially be placed in two categories: those resulting from production and the enjoyment of wealth and those resulting from the oppressive impact of poverty.

The first of those two categories is found within a system of production and consumption practised by a limited number of societies with a minority percentage of the world's population. Nevertheless, they have produced the greatest ecological upheavals. The second category is the inevitable result of ways of life that vast sections of mankind have been compelled to follow in order to survive.

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The actions in the former category are voluntary and deliberate, reflecting an option frequently exercised in the pursuit of frills or, at least, of other than vital purposes. The actions in the latter are inevitable and necessary and reflect the elementary survival instinct. It is obvious that, whereas in the first there is the possibility for alternative conduct, in the second there is not.

Consequently, it is also obvious that it must be the industrialized countries which - given their greater responsibility for generating ecological problems and because of their greater potential for adopting alternative policies and modes of conduct - will have to contribute most to the effort of restoring the health of our ecology. They will have, inter alia, to provide developing countries with access to additional financing that may be necessary for implementing environmentally sound development policies, along with access to environmentally appropriate technologies.

The struggle for the preservation of our environment cannot be carried out only on the ecological front. That struggle will turn into a mission impossible so long as there persists a contrast in excesses characterizing the current international economic order. There will be no definitive solution of the problem of ecological deterioration so long as there continues unbridled the unfolding of production means and consumption styles in industrialized countries that entail waste, pollution and overexploitation and so long as the developing countries continue to endure the poverty that is afflicting vast sectors of their peoples because of the general deterioration of their economies crushed by the burden of external debt and their growing inability to share in the benefits of progress owing to the technological abyss separating them from the industrialized world. The challenge before the 1992 conference is to provide a solution commensurate with the complexity of the problem.

Dame Ruth Nita BARROW (Barbados): This is a time of night when we need a mental shake-up as we come to the close of a long day. But I could not begin my statement without expressing my personal compliments on the skilful way in which the President, with the assistance of the vice-presidents, have so far guided the work of the General Assembly.

We are considering what has certainly become the most well debated, publicized and perhaps contentious issue on the global agenda. Almost daily, in newspapers, periodicals and on television and radio, many learned and often highly emotion-charged discussions on the environment may be heard and found. There can be no doubt that the environment is an issue that is well placed on the agenda of the Assembly - the manifestation of man's struggle to bequeath a better world to our children. We must, however, be careful lest these emotions find their way into our deliberations and get the better of us; the only certain result will be acrimony and deadlock on an issue which demands our urgent attention.

Much of the debate on the environment has focused on the concept of sustainable development, as elaborated by the World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the Brundtland Commission. The Commission and its distinguished Chairperson deserve our accolades for providing such substantive food for thought on this critical issue.

Regrettably, the concept has sometimes been misrepresented. Too often attention has focused on the element of "sustainability" whereas the "development" side of the equation has not been highlighted quite as much; too often it is seen to be synonymous with conservation and preservation of the environment and much less so in relation to proper management of the environment for current and future development.

It is no secret that for many developing countries the concept of sustainable development is viewed with suspicion. Some of these concerns are well founded; for

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in essence developing countries fear that we are being pressured to make drastic changes in our development strategies - strategies we have fought hard to adopt and adapt to our own circumstances. Now we are being told in effect that these strategies for development are not quite so good as we had been led to believe; we are being told to adopt more enlightened approaches to development, and this at a time when the burdens of debt, the net reverse flow of resources, protectionism and declining terms of trade are creating insurmountable obstacles to our development.

One author has likened this paradox to a football match in which for most of the time allotted one team dictates all the rules and is thus able to score most of the goals, whether by fair or foul means, and to build up a commanding lead. Then fifteen minutes before the close of play that team calls time-out and decides that the rest of the game should be played fair.

The pattern of development across much of the globe reflects just such a state of affairs. While some have commanding leads in industrial development, production, accumulation of resources, provision of services for their people and enjoy otherwise enviable levels of consumption, others are marked by poverty, severe infrastructural deficiencies and human resource needs. Capacities to adjust to more enlightened development strategies are clearly unequal.

The sooner this fact is integrated fully into our discussions and into the various programmes of action on the environment, the sooner will true progress be seen on the environment. In essence States such as my own are seeking a fuller appreciation of and support for their development objectives as an integral part of efforts to protect and preserve the environment; we seek a more equitable sharing of the burdens of adjusting to more sustainable and environmentally sound development.

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An essential part of this will be the adoption of a fresh approach to technology transfers from developed to developing countries. Environmental problems, such as global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer, are open to solution or at least amelioration if only the appropriate technology could be developed and made available. By and large, developing countries are well behind developed countries in the research efforts to find combustion technologies that cause less pollution and substitutes for chlorofluorocarbons, among others. Some mechanism must be worked out to make such new developments available on concessional terms to developing countries.

Perhaps the search for such substitutes should be taken out of the realm of the free market and a more co-operative approach adopted. It violates all precepts of equity for developing countries to replace polluting technologies - purchased in the first place at market prices from developed countries - with new, cleaner technologies, also purchased under similar conditions. The protection of the environment and indeed the survival of mankind cannot simply be left to the vagaries of the market-place.

In this regard proposals such as that for the establishment of a planet protection fund made by the Prime Minister of India at the ninth Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries deserve our fullest consideration and elaboration. The representative of India has now made it available to those of us who did not have it.

It must be recognized, however, that technological solutions in themselves do not cover the full range of environmental problems confronting the international community.

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Indeed, perhaps it has been man's unenlightened dependence on technology that has brought us to this state of affairs. New and additional financial resources will also be necessary for environmental programmes and projects geared towards identifying the nature of threats to the environment and devising safe ways of addressing them. Additional resources will be needed for the training of personnel from developing countries to undertake the varied facets of environmental management. Particularly in the case of small States with limited capacities, financial and other, considerable assistance will be necessary to enhance capabilities to plan for and respond to environmental disasters.

It is somewhat ironic that at the very time the need for additional assistance is greatest developing countries are faced with measures that could reduce such flows. Barbados has recognized that in the interest of sustainable development environmental concerns must be integrated into our development planning. We, however, strongly advocate a non-confrontational approach to this issue - one which gives full recognition to development needs.

The Government of Barbados has recognized the need for action in at least one other area to address environmental problems. In the final analysis all environmental problems may be traced to one source - namely, people, their attitudes towards their environment and their capacities to adopt environmentally sound management methods. Measures to protect the environment will involve, to a great extent, the reshaping of attitudes; we view this to be as relevant to the wealthy industrialist, stockbroker, or computer specialist enjoying a high standard of living as it is to the poor peasant in a developing country. The only difference is in the relative ability to adopt new, more environmentally conscious patterns of production and consumption.

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With that in mind, the Government has embarked upon an environmental education and public awareness programme. The recently launched publication Barbados Environment News will seek to keep the Barbadian public abreast of events and new developments in environmental conservation and protection at the local, regional and international levels. There are also plans for an environment poster that will focus attention on threats to the environment and the need for proper management of our limited natural resources so as to ensure future sustainable development.

Barbados hopes that the 1992 conference on environment and development, to be held in Brazil, will include these issues among those it will address. The conference offers the opportunity for a truly global approach to be taken to problems that impinge upon mankind's very existence.

Above all we believe that the conference - including all its preparatory stages - should endeavour to break down the barriers between environmental preservation and protection on the one hand and the fulfilment of development objectives on the other. It is essential that the efforts to protect and preserve the environment not have a negative effect upon the development priorities of developing countries. Every effort should be made to reach agreement on measures to support the efforts of developing countries to play a greater part in preserving the environment. Indeed, if developing countries are to make the sacrifices necessary to help preserve the environment for future generations, we must be assured that in so doing our future generations are not exposed to the poverty and inequality that we have witnessed. The conference must also be action-oriented and more than an occasion for an exchange of rhetoric regarding the origins of environmental problems. It should provide the opportunity for firm agreement on plans of action, including technical support and the provision of the necessary new and additional financial assistance to address various environmental problems.

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Indeed, we must endeavour to devote attention to a wide range of problems that confront us. Among these may be included the threat to the ozone layer, global warming, the preservation and management of genetic resources, land-use planning and co-ordination, and forest and watershed management. The rise in sea level, the pollution of the oceans, degradation of the coastal and marine environment, solid and liquid waste management have also all been mentioned by others tonight.

In the view of Barbados, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as the United Nations body charged with primary responsibility for the environment, must play a central and leading role in the preparations for the conference. It must be recognized, however, that other agencies and bodies in the fields of meteorology, health, food and agriculture, human settlements, marine affairs, science and technology and energy, among others, are engaged in work that is relevant to the environment. Their contribution cannot be excluded.

It must be recognized, too, that given the global nature of the problems we confront nothing less than global participation in the preparatory process for the conference will be acceptable. That has been stressed again and again. Small developing nations such as my own must be assured of access to the various secretariat support structures as we prepare for the conference. Similarly, despite our deep interest, but given our limited means, Barbados and other small States may find it difficult to participate fully in a preparatory process that is widely dispersed. In this regard attention should be given, as suggested by the Governing Council of UNEP at its fifteenth session, to the establishment of a voluntary fund to support the participation of developing countries in the conference and in its preparatory process.

Our discussions on the preparations for the 1992 conference on environment and development must take place in an atmosphere of calm and reason; we must remain conscious of the need to work together and to support each other. In this match

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no one team can win, no matter how great its lead; some concessions must be given to ensure the achievement of the ultimate goal; a better life for our children. Similarly, none of us can remain spectators; it is a process in which all must participate.

An exhibition on war and peace has just opened in the public lobby of the United Nations. It has a considerable section on the environment. A button that is distributed there has on it a Kenyan proverb that is very appropriate to our discussions. It says, "Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents; it was loaned to you by your children".

Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh): Over two years ago the World Commission on Environment and Development - the Brundtland Commission - drew our attention to the gathering crisis concerning our environment. Since then we have witnessed a surge of awareness about the challenge that this unprecedented crisis poses for our common future. Between then and now, slowly but surely, we have begun to define the broad outlines of our collective response to this challenge. Several processes are now under way to strengthen national actions and promote regional and international co-operation on the environment. We have also come a long way in further developing and providing concrete shape for our ideas on a United Nations conference on environment and development in 1992.

The decision to devote this meeting of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly to discussing matters relating to that conference, including its preparations, attests to its great importance. It also reflects the degree of seriousness with which we would like to prepare ourselves for the occasion. Like other delegations, that of Bangladesh intends to participate actively in discussions on various aspects of the proposed conference. We commit our fullest co-operation to the promotion of agreement on all outstanding issues.

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The 1992 Conference should consider the environmental problems afflicting our planet in their broad socio-economic context. Valuable experience gained since the 1982 Stockholm Conference, ideas and recommendations contained in the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the report of the Brundtland Commission have all understood this important necessity. It has become increasingly evident that challenges to our ecosystem must be considered in the light of present production and consumption patterns in the world, particularly in the developed countries. It is also being increasingly appreciated that the complex challenges may require, in response, radically different approaches and emphases in different parts of the world. In the developing countries, for example, nature is threatened by underdevelopment itself. This root cause of environmental degradation must be attacked frontally if our environment is to be preserved. The scope of the 1992 conference on environment and development must allow a full and serious discussion of this aspect of the global environmental crisis.

From this perspective, the relevant preambular and operative paragraphs of General Assembly resolution 43/196 appear to be of particular relevance for our deliberations. We agree that, taken together, they should set out the scope and general objectives for the conference. The last session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also made some valuable recommendations, which are contained in its decision 15/3. The list annexed to this decision identifies a number of important environmental problems for consideration. We are positive that the forthcoming conference will address them substantively. It should be one of the foremost objectives of the 1992 conference to identify the sources of these problems and seriously consider the most appropriate way to overcome them. The task that lies ahead in this regard is most definitely a complex one requiring actions on several fronts. There is thus a need to achieve agreement on international legal norms and guidelines for protecting the

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environment and to put in place mechanisms for monitoring and surveillance of specific cases of environmental degradation. There is also a need to identify strategies, to be co-ordinated, as appropriate, globally and regionally, to intensify national and international actions. This exercise should lead to formal agreements on specific commitments to deal with major environmental and developmental issues. We are convinced that the mandate given to the 1992 conference by the General Assembly this fall will take due note of these imperative needs.

Environmental problems will certainly demand increasing resources. Many of our discussions during recent months have underscored this point. The conference must naturally quantify the financial requirements for successful implementation of its decisions and recommendations. The efforts to be made during the conference to identify possible sources of additional resources will indeed be of the utmost importance. But, as has been stressed, the conference must not limit itself to this; it must take a further step and agree on specific commitments on the transfer of additional resources to developing countries to enhance their ability to implement conference decisions.

The development of environmentally sound technologies and the wide diffusion and application of these technologies should also be high on the agenda for the 1992 conference. Bangladesh strongly supports the view that, during deliberations on preparations for the 1992 conference, special emphasis should be given to this matter. We emphasize that steps to facilitate and support the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, particularly to the developing countries on non-commercial and concessional terms, will be of particular relevance. Governments, industries and scientific communities should be actively drawn into the preparations on this issue.

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There is also an urgent need to promote development and strengthen appropriate institutions at the national, regional and global levels to address environmental problems in the context of socio-economic development processes. The entire United Nations system needs to be strengthened to enhance its capacity to cope with the fast-evolving global environmental crisis. These and other questions related to how best to organize future international co-operation in the field of environment and development must be seriously addressed.

Much of the success of the 1992 conference in dealing with this complex set of issues hinges on careful and substantive preparations. Several ideas have been advanced on how best to proceed with such preparations. Of all the options suggested, we are particularly attracted to the idea that substantive preparations for the conference should be entrusted to an open-ended preparatory committee with universal participation. This would not only ensure the maximum possible participation in the preparatory process but also provide the opportunity to approach seemingly intractable environmental problems from the broadest possible perspective.

We should note that the preparatory work will inevitably involve questions extending outside the strictly technical aspects of issues to be considered. These will inescapably be linked to questions of growth and development, legal issues and even the financial and budgetary position of the United Nations. This is a major consideration in favour of entrusting the preparatory work to a preparatory committee that would ensure universal participation. Bangladesh, however, remains flexible about the number of meetings to be held by the preparatory committee.

Bangladesh strongly believes that all United Nations bodies, particularly UNEP, should continue to play a prominent role during the preparatory process and enrich the preparations for the 1992 conference by both contributing inputs on substantive issues and extending technical support. We are also particularly

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mindful of the need to ensure the active participation of the least developed countries in the preparatory process through appropriate financial arrangements and support.

We are pleased that much of the initial differences on the title of the 1992 conference have dissipated. We should now be able to take a decision on the matter. It is our firm conviction that the same will also be possible for the venue and the date of the conference. Bangladesh has already welcomed and supported Brazil's offer to host the conference. We hope that a decision to this effect will be adopted during the current session of the General Assembly. We also support the date for the conference recommended in UNEP Governing Council decision 15/3.

To conclude, I would like to state and stress that Bangladesh has great expectations of the conference. Our interest in the success of the conference stems from our deep concern over the present state of the world's climate and the worrying prospect of its further deterioration. In keeping with this serious concern, only recently, during the summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade, our President, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, called for the early conclusion of a convention on the global climate. Our Government has also initiated important steps to integrate environmental concerns in our policy-making process. The recent formation of our Ministry of Environment is one step that we have taken in this regard.

We are aware that neither these small steps in themselves nor the 1992 conference will solve all our environmental problems. We feel, however, that a significant and important beginning has been made. Given our will to act with a due sense of urgency and commitment, these initial steps will definitely help us achieve concrete results. We are confident that the 1992 conference on environment

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and development will spur the necessary global efforts on a significant scale. These are now needed more critically than ever before to stem and reverse the pace of nature's degradation before it is too late.

Mr. TANASIE (Romania): Worldwide developments, events and gloomy predictions in recent years have turned the issues of environment and development into some of the most challenging and burning problems of our time. All of us are increasingly aware that the delicate balance of forces on which the very preservation of life on this planet rests is now being threatened by the increasing exploitation of its limited resources, growing population pressure, unrestrained consumption and uncontrolled disposal of the waste products of human activity. The environmental challenges facing mankind are human in origin and global in nature. Our attempts to solve them will therefore require both human intervention and global action and co-operation.

Notwithstanding the calls for action and international co-operation in arresting the alarming deterioration of the Earth's environment issued by the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held at Stockholm in 1972, the worldwide environmental decline - rather than being reversed - has been accentuated.

In highly developed, affluent societies unrestrained demands for ever-larger quantities of goods and services and the huge quantity of fumes, gases and industrial and household wastes have resulted in acid rain and in air, soil and water pollution and have become the main causes of the global greenhouse effect and the depletion of the Earth's ozone layer. Moreover, current patterns of growth in industry and development in those countries are leading to an increasing spread of toxic and harmful substances into the human food chain and into the underground fresh water supplies.

In less-developed countries environmental degradation is generally a symptom or consequence of underdevelopment and poverty. Those who possess neither human capital nor means of production often have no choice but to exploit to the full the natural resources - land, forests, fisheries - to which they have access. Underdevelopment and poverty are thus a major cause of the degradation of the

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physical environment. At the same time, the deterioration of the environment accentuates underdevelopment and poverty.

The environmental constraints closing in on the world community have already produced significant changes in the policies of Governments and a new awareness of the limits within which world development can progress.

International co-operation and commitment are essential to solve environmental problems. At the same time, action is ultimately crucial at the national level. All countries must take effective measures, in accordance with their respective capabilities, to solve current environmental and developmental problems. Each country will no doubt have its own environmental and developmental problems, its own priorities for dealing with them, its own technical standards and policy measures.

The industrialized countries bear a profound responsibility to make the necessary arrangements and to redirect their energies along more sustainable paths. Countries where pollution and hazardous wastes originate to the greatest extent should assume the major part of the burden in combating pollution and disposing of waste. They must also provide the financial and technical resources needed to help less-developed countries eliminate underdevelopment, attack poverty and revitalize their economies. For those whose concern must be survival in the near future, the costs of environmentally sound development might be untenable. That means that success in combating and reversing environmental degradation in developing countries and in solving problems of a global nature will require not only changes in perceptions and approaches but also additional resources and strengthened international co-operation.

For too long now humanity has been fraught with divisions and imbalances that not only perpetuate environmental decay but also threaten to cause intensified

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

regional and global conflicts. The new developments in international life and early steps towards a reversal of the global arms race hold out the promise that, increasingly, human resources and energies may be redirected towards the immense challenge of finding and implementing new patterns of economic and social development that can be sustained without further environmental deterioration.

And yet environmental concern cannot be considered in a vacuum and in disregard of the constraints currently impeding the development process, especially in the developing countries. That is why we welcome the decision of the General Assembly that the twin themes of the 1992 conference should be environment and development. We are also happy that the proposal concerning the responsibility of States for the protection of the environment submitted at the forty-third session of the General Assembly by Romania has met with such wide approval. That proves that environmentally sound development is of great importance to all countries, industrialized or developing, whatever their stage of development.

The ongoing discussions about the scope and themes of the future conference clearly show that existing and future problems in this field, as in other important areas, cannot and will not be corrected automatically by the operation of market forces. Intervention by public figures is essential. In certain cases intervention by a single Government in the form of taxes, bans on the use of certain materials or the implementation of environmental standards, will suffice. In other cases collective actions by a group of countries or global action will be necessary.

We believe that the 1992 conference on environment and development, apart from taking stock of developments since the first conference, should examine the following priorities: first, restraining and halting soil degradation,

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deforestation and the process of desertification; second, management of fresh-water resources and reducing water pollution; third, control of marine pollution and proper management of coastal areas; fourth, control of atmospheric pollution and prevention of climatic problems, such as climate change, depletion of the ozone layer and acid rain; fifth, conservation of biological diversity; sixth, reduction of hazardous wastes through development of low- and non-waste technologies and environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and potentially toxic chemicals; seventh, prevention and reduction of disasters; eighth, development and transfer of environmentally sound technology; ninth, institutional changes in the United Nations system to cope with the new environmental challenges.

Those issues should also be incorporated in the new international development strategy for the last decade of this century and become the object of a concerted approach to and search for collective solutions by all Member States.

Romania wholeheartedly supports the generous offer of the Government of Brazil to act as host to the 1992 conference. We earnestly hope that that conference will represent a historic turning-point in mobilizing individual and collective efforts and the tremendous reserves of human knowledge to make our planet a healthier and safer place to live, not only for today's generation but for many generations to come.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.