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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 13 November 1989, at 10.00 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

- Address by Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia
- Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa [28] (continued)
  - (a) Report of the Special Committee against Apartheid
  - (b) Report of the Intergovernmental Group to Monitor the Supply and Shipping of Oil and Petroleum Products to South Africa
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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

THE PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President BEN ALI (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to extend my best wishes to and express my highest respect for the Assembly and to convey Tunisia's feelings of deep esteem for the United Nations and its laudable efforts to ensure the fulfilment of the aspirations of all mankind to progress, security and peace.

The election of Nigeria to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly is a source of satisfaction to us. It is a tribute to Nigeria's privileged position and a recognition of Africa's positive role in the fulfilment of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the achievement of its purposes in the service of the cause of peace.

Today our world is undergoing great changes which give international life new and important dimensions, promote the present climate of understanding within the international community and provide a propitious atmosphere which has helped to a large extent in the containment of regional conflicts and their eventual solution. All this shows that the international community, after harsh and sometimes bloody trials, is beginning to find its way towards wisdom and level-headedness.

(President Ben Ali)

In our opinion, these changes are best illustrated by the decrease in the ideological struggles that, until the recent past had been the direct source of a great many situations of tension and conflict, bringing in their train suffering and sorrow for many peoples. This important evolution in international relations has resulted in a climate favourable to the opening up of wide prospects for mankind, enabling it to consider its future with realism and wisdom.

The rapid progress of technology, particularly in the field of communication and information, has undoubtedly contributed to reducing distances, propagating ideas, bringing peoples together, and eliminating certain contradictions. The international community, with increasing solidarity, is thus able to protect itself against the dangers that threaten international détente, which we all consider to be of benefit to our peoples, enabling them to mobilize all their energies in the service of development.

In this respect the United Nations provides the best framework and is the instrument most likely to consolidate this process and guide it in the right direction, in accordance with the objectives that the Organization has been working to achieve for almost half a century.

The resurgence of confidence within the international community regarding United Nations action gives us cause for optimism and strengthens our conviction that international problems can be solved only by applying the principles set out in the United Nations Charter, which all countries are pledged to respect.

(President Ben Ali)

While today we express real satisfaction that the cause of the people of South Africa is evolving towards a solution as a result of the imminent proclamation of independence in Namibia - thanks to the joint efforts of the international community and the United Nations - we are distressed at and disquieted by the blind repression carried out against the militant Palestinian people because of their legitimate struggle against the forces of oppression and occupation. Those forces are using all possible means to put down the intifadah, and are continuing to reject all peace initiatives and decisions of the United Nations.

The situation in South Africa is a focus of our attention particularly because of the stubbornness of the minority régime in power and its loathsome policy of apartheid - even though there are certain factors that we hope might constitute the starting point for the setting up of a democratic régime that would take into consideration the will of the majority, in accordance with the natural progression of history.

Tunisia found the United Nations to be the best support in its struggle for national liberation. Since then, it has continued to benefit, in its development efforts, from the constant support of United Nations specialized bodies. In reiterating our gratitude to and deepest consideration for the United Nations, we reaffirm our unfailing attachment to its Charter and objectives.

We have on several occasions contributed by giving our support to the efforts of the United Nations, particularly in Africa, where in the early sixties we took an effective part in United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Congo. At present we are taking part in the process that is to lead to the independence of Namibia, an African sister country. We shall always remain ready to support the United Nations in its diligent action to ensure the triumph of just causes throughout the world.

(President Ben Ali)

Deeply attached as we are to the values and principles of the United Nations aimed at the fulfilment of the peoples' aspirations to emancipation and dignity, we have undertaken radical reforms in Tunisia since the change that took place on 7 November 1987, within the framework of constitutional legality and in response to the call of duty and the homeland.

In accordance with the principles we proclaimed at the time, we have resolutely worked to set up a political régime that would enable Tunisian citizens to exercise their natural right to participate in shaping their future within a system based on democracy, freedom and equality of opportunity, within the framework of clearly defined objectives to establish a state of law and protect human rights.

Our ratification, without reservations, of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is a clear illustration of our particular commitment to those principles.

It is a special honour for Tunisia to have been chosen as the seat of the Arab Institute for Human Rights. It is also an expression of confidence in us, and a measure of the responsibility we are shouldering with loyalty and conviction. We are determined to consolidate that body's action and ensure its success in fulfilling its great mission in the best possible way.

Besides our efforts aimed at consolidating the values of our civilization and the authenticity of our people, we have worked towards extending reconciliation to our geographic environment and creating an atmosphere of understanding and harmony among the peoples of the Maghreb, thus favouring the establishment of the Arab

(President Ben Ali)

Maghreb Union. This is in keeping with the hopes of our successive generations and with the major changes in the world today, which is witnessing the emergence of regional groupings.

In our view, the establishment of the Maghreb Union corresponds to the United Nations policy whereby the grouping at the regional level of States with similar characteristics is considered to be a factor of rapprochement between peoples, a factor likely to create a new dynamic in international relations based coexistence, co-operation and common interest. We are adopting these same principles in our relations with the countries of the Mediterranean, which must remain a lake of peace and an area of co-operation and understanding.

Similarly, our efforts in the framework of other international and regional organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement are in keeping with the objectives of the United Nations, which we regard as the ideal forum for the whole of mankind, by virtue of its universality, credibility and moral authority.

Convinced that détente and harmony can bear fruit only in a climate of fair and equitable international co-operation, the United Nations has given the economic field particular attention. For that reason it has in its resolutions called for the establishment of a new international economic order, thus showing its deep awareness of the great differences between peoples and the potential impact of those differences on international peace.

(President Ben Ali)

After its accession to independence Tunisia became only too well aware of the influence of the industrialized countries on all aspects of development.

Far-reaching reforms are necessary in international relations which have a bearing on economic growth, such as protectionist policies, a deterioration in the terms of trade, the worsening of indebtedness, and the adverse flow of financial resources and the resulting decrease of the capital reserves intended for the development of the countries of the South, particularly in Africa.

The countries of the North are therefore urgently called upon to go beyond mere "patching-up" operations and to adopt a radical restructuring of world economies that safeguards the rights of the countries of the South. The future of the industrialized countries is to a large extent closely linked to the economies of the third-world countries.

While deploring the lack of political will in certain circles, we are resolved to continue our efforts in the foregoing direction, hoping that the next special session of the General Assembly to be devoted to economic recovery will put forward new ideas and bolder initiatives in North-South relations.

Although we are satisfied with the decisions taken to alleviate the debts of certain developing countries, we call again for the convening of an international conference to examine the question of indebtedness, taking into account the special features of every debtor country. There is in fact no reason why middle-income countries should be excluded from the benefits granted to other countries with regard to indebtedness. Consideration should be given in this respect to the huge efforts they are exerting to introduce structural reforms into their economies, ensure the success of their development plans, and honour their commitments while relying upon their own potentials.

(President Sen Ali)

We are still calling for the improvement of the international monetary situation, which represents a major obstacle to the achievement of our legitimate aspirations to development and progress. Our efforts have taken various forms. Apart from the suggestions we made, in that regard, at the Toronto summit meeting, we have also raised this problem at the non-aligned countries' summit meeting in Belgrade and within the framework of action undertaken in the international bodies concerned.



(President Ben Ali)

Today, the third world countries lack neither human potential nor natural resources. This provides us with real possibilities for building up our national economies and for establishing horizontal co-operation among the countries of the South.

However, this co-operation in our opinion, cannot be a substitute for dialogue and co-operation with the countries of the North, but it does represent an effective means of utilizing our resources and our potential in the best possible way, by relying on our own capacities.

While considering that the agreement reached by the two super-Powers represents one of the main factors of détente, we hope that this détente will extend to international relations as a whole and that it will not lead to the marginalization of the interests of the developing countries, which have contributed to a considerable extent to laying the foundations of détente and are sparing no effort to turn it into concrete reality.

We welcomed, at the time, the conclusion by the two blocs of an agreement to reduce the arms race. It appeared to be a positive step towards the global and total suppression of those tools of terror and destruction, which drain away huge amounts of money and enormous potential. We firmly hope that those resources will now be used to promote development and improve the lot of mankind.

However, while welcoming and supporting international harmony, which has kindled new hopes in us, we are also aware of the actual or latent dangers threatening the world today. These dangers are the consequence not only of long-lasting issues that have yet to be resolved or of the imbalance in the world economy but also of the applications of technological progress that have resulted in ecological degradation, pollution of the environment and the disasters they imply, as well as of the spread of dangerous diseases and various social evils.

(President Ben Ali)

An effective solution to these problems can be achieved, in our opinion, only by making a spirit of solidarity and common awareness prevail in international relations and by drawing up a clear-cut strategy in the context of a global project to support détente and promote harmony and civilization. To that end, we call once more for the holding of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to study the problems of growth and environment.

Today, I believe, conditions are propitious for me to exhort you, from this rostrum, to think together about the conclusion, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a Treaty on peace and progress between countries of the North and those of the South, based on peaceful coexistence, justice and the promotion of co-operation, in keeping with a renewed outlook and lofty principles of promising prospects for mankind.

We fully trust that our international Organization, thanks to its wide experience and pre-eminent position, will be able to implement that ambitious project to promote civilization, having already scored so many triumphs on the road of decolonization and having brought so many conflicts to an end. In this context, the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has played a prominent role that has won him our esteem and respect.

Allow me to extend to you my best greetings and express the hope that our guiding principle shall always be common action for a better world.

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

Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

## AGENDA ITEM 28 (CONTINUED)

POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

- (a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID (A/44/22 and Corr.2)
- (b) REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP TO MONITOR THE SUPPLY AND SHIPPING OF OIL AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO SOUTH AFRICA (A/44/44)
- (c) REPORT OF THE COMMISSION AGAINST APARTHEID IN SPORTS (A/44/47)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/533, A/44/555 and Corr.1, A/44/556, A/44/698)
- (e) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE (A/44/709)
- (f) DRAFT DECISION (A/44/L.25)

The PRESIDENT: After consultations with the Chairmen of regional groups, the General Assembly has before it a draft decision on the organization of the special session of the General Assembly on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa, issued as document A/44/L.25.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/44/L.25?

Draft decision A/44/L.25 was adopted.

## AGENDA ITEM 7

## NOTIFICATION BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL UNDER ARTICLE 12, PARAGRAPH 2, OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/44/528 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/44/528 and Add.1.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 7.

## PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Assembly that, at the request of the sponsors, consideration of agenda item 155, entitled "African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation" has been postponed to a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.