



General Assembly

**EXEMPLAIRES D'ARCHIVES
FILE COPY**

A retourner / Return to Distribution C. 111

PROVISIONAL

A/40/PV.6
24 September 1985

ENGLISH

Fortieth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 24 September 1985, at 9.30 a.m.

President: Mr. DE PINIÉS (Spain)
later: Mr. GUTIERREZ (Costa Rica)
(Vice-President)

- International relief to Mexico: draft resolution [147]
- Address by Mr. Julio María Sanguinetti, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Vayrynen (Finland)
Mr. Shevardnadze (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Poos (Luxembourg)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 147

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF TO MEXICO: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/40/L.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): In connection with this item, which the Assembly is considering as a matter of priority, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution, contained in document A/40/L.1.

As representatives know, the draft resolution was distributed yesterday. In it the Assembly expresses its solidarity and support to the Government and people of Mexico and its appreciation to the States, international and regional agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals that are providing emergency relief to that country; it requests the Secretary-General to mobilize resources to contribute to the relief and reconstruction task undertaken by the Government of Mexico; it calls upon all States to contribute generously to those relief efforts in the affected areas and, to the extent possible, to channel their assistance through the United Nations system; and finally it requests the Secretary-General to co-ordinate multilateral assistance and, in consultation with the Government of Mexico, to identify the emergency and medium-term and long-term needs in order to contribute to the reconstruction of the affected areas.

May I take it that the Assembly adopts draft resolution A/40/L.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 40/1).

Mr. SEPULVEDA AMOR (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to convey to you, Sir, the great satisfaction of the delegation of Mexico at seeing you preside over the work of the General Assembly at its fortieth session, not only because of the deep and enduring relations between our two countries, but also because of your well-known diplomatic experience.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

We thank you also for your interest, both as President of the General Assembly and in a private capacity, in the recent events in Mexico and for having offered your co-operation. We wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his sympathetic expressions of solidarity and for having instructed the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, from the very outset, to send relief to my country.

I should like briefly to thank the fraternal countries of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, which took the noble initiative of sponsoring resolution 40/1, which has just been adopted, on international relief to Mexico. We see that sponsorship as yet another gesture of the Latin American solidarity which has always united us in difficult times. In particular, our thanks go to the delegation of Nicaragua, which proposed the inclusion of this item on our agenda, and to that of Brazil, the current Chairman of the Latin American Group.

We convey to all States Members of the Organization the thanks of the Government of Mexico for having responded unanimously to the call of Latin America, and for having decided to act in a multilateral way, and to engage the co-operation of the agencies of the United Nations system to channel the contributions which various countries wish to make, in connection both with our present emergency situation and with the reconstruction process which must follow in the future.

The damage caused by the earthquake is very serious, although the disaster area is limited; we shall have to be tenacious and enduring in our efforts to return life to normal. The people and the Government of Mexico, under the leadership of President Miguel de la Madrid, are employing their own means to cope with the catastrophe, through spontaneous social mobilization. We have also received generous governmental and private contributions from various countries, for which we are very grateful.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

As noted by the President of Mexico, the moral and material support we have received from abroad is not only a sign of esteem but is also a reflection of the bonds of brotherhood and co-operation we maintain with all nations. This is an inspiring complement to the concern and heroism demonstrated by Mexicans at this difficult time.

The Assembly's decision will without doubt encourage and assist our people. Moreover, it will also reaffirm our confidence in the lofty principles of this Organization, and in the human solidarity on which the United Nations is founded.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 147.

The meeting was suspended at 10.10 a.m. and resumed at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. JULIO MARIA SANGUINETTI, PRESIDENT OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, His Excellency Mr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SANGUINETTI (interpretation from Spanish): I feel doubly pleased to be addressing this Assembly on behalf of the people of Uruguay. I am pleased in the first place to see you, Sir, the representative of a people linked to the Uruguayan people by a past of common roots and a present of shared ideals, presiding over this Assembly. Secondly, I am pleased to be here for the celebration of an anniversary of singular significance: the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

If having existed for four decades is in the case of any human institution a reason for rejoicing, this is even more true in the case of the United Nations, the embodiment of the ideal of the brotherhood of all mankind. Its survival from one day to the next in a world fraught with danger and dominated by national selfishness should be a cause for celebration.

In spite of the grave difficulties that it has had to face and the continuous crises that have tested its mettle, this vulnerable ship, which provides a refuge for the hopes of the world, has remained afloat and continued its journey, despite all scepticism, and has succeeded in living twice as long as its predecessor, the League of Nations.

(President Sanguinetti)

In spite of the criticism directed against the system, the world has lived for almost two generations without conflicts of world-wide scope. That is no mean feat. Currents of solidarity and co-operation which had never before existed in the history of humanity have been generated. A splendid process of decolonization has been launched with the support of the Organization.

Having started with 51 countries signatories to the Charter, the Organization today includes 159 independent, sovereign nations.

These achievements cannot disguise the weaknesses arising, above all, from the Governments' lack of faith in the Organization and the non-observance of the precepts of the Charter. For this reason, this is a propitious opportunity both to reform and change what must be changed and to undertake a cool analysis to determine which faults are to be attributed to the system as such and which to the flaws and inconsistencies of countries.

The Organization, in the last resort, is a reflection of the countries themselves, their faults and their virtues. Its value, moreover, should be measured not only by what it has done but also by what it has prevented, what it has averted - a perspective that highlights the peace-making activities of the United Nations.

The San Francisco Charter, although not perfect, seemed at that time adequately to reconcile the transparency of principles with the opacity of reality. But the world has changed and the forces of violence, destruction and discord have renewed their assault. It is true to say that the United Nations has struggled for peace and justice for 40 years. But does this test of endurance, this persistence in existing despite so much adversity; give us grounds for hope with regard to the future? Do the conditions necessary to allow us to expect that future generations will celebrate a new anniversary of the Organization 40 years hence exist at present?

(President Sanguinetti)

The United Nations has become an indispensable element of contemporary international life. We, its Members, who are responsible for its continuing to exist, should insist that a collective effort be made to establish the mechanisms which will allow the Organization to be more effective without substantially altering its legal framework.

The United Nations arose out of a cataclysm to replace the League of Nations, which was also the outcome of a tragic world upheaval. Let us not wait for a third cataclysm to improve and strengthen it.

In this Assembly Uruguay renews its commitment to continue to support the Organization unconditionally. It is prepared to promote and share in any effort designed to revise the practices and systems of the United Nations to make it more flexible and effective in both the political and the economic spheres and to increase support for the political functions of the Secretary-General.

This commitment by Uruguay is, today, backed by the moral and political force that emanates from the existence of its own democratic institutions, recently regained in a peaceful process of institutional normalization firmly rooted in the vote of the people. As the fifth decade of the United Nations begins, the spirit that Uruguay brings to bear in this forum is different from that in the previous decade. We have begun a historic phase of restoration of democracy and democratic reaffirmation in keeping with the deepest convictions of the Uruguayan people. These convictions are rooted in the long-gone era of the struggle for independence, when Uruguayans, in an act of renunciation and loyalty almost without precedent in history, abandoned their towns, homes and property to follow Artigas, their liberating hero, who never forgot that the only support of his political power lay in the will of the people. The profound symbiosis of the people and their leader, the governed and the governor, is admirably reflected in Artigas's own words: "My authority emanates from you and ceases in your sovereign presence."

(President Sanguinetti)

This is the concept of democracy that has remained in the soul of the of the Uruguayan people throughout our history and that now blooms once more as a part of our inner being, as an element of our identity as a people, as a natural vocation that we can deny only at the risk of losing our way, of going astray, of being other than whom we are. With the democracy which we have now recovered, we have ourselves recovered.

As it returns to democracy, Uruguay returns to its traditional position of scrupulous respect for human rights and for the promotion and development of mechanisms and institutions that will ensure the observance and protection of those rights.

Because we were a people caught in the middle, between Spain and Portugal, the two great empires, because our Iberian roots were strengthened by a flood of Italian immigrants and later by the migratory currents of French, Swiss, Armenian, Jewish and other peoples, pluralism, tolerance, a belief in freedom and respect for human rights lie deep within the very nature of our being.

On the domestic level, no sooner had the new Government assumed power than it declared a generous general amnesty for political prisoners and fully restored political freedoms and civil rights. We have now set ourselves the task of carrying out as soon as possible the process of restoring the rights that were violated and normalizing the situations that were altered by the previous régime. Uruguayan democracy is once more on the march.

(President Sanguinetti)

On the international level, one of the first acts of our Government was to ratify the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights. In keeping with our traditions, we have renewed our struggle for human rights everywhere, under all systems of government. We shall pursue that struggle without bringing ideological considerations to bear and without making choices on the basis of self-interest.

For this reason, our Government cannot but strongly condemn apartheid, that remnant of a blighted era, and withhold recognition of the interim government of Namibia illegally established by South Africa.

Within the context of human rights, the international community must direct its attention to the effective application of that most basic of rights, the right to life.

When one thinks of the tragic fact that millions of children die for lack of assistance it is impossible not to question the so-called progress of our human society. There could be no better way to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations than by concentrating our efforts on supporting the worthy task of child immunization undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), so that the target of universal immunization by 1990 may be achieved.

As a country that is emerging from a painful experience in this area, we urge Governments that are dedicated to peace to demonstrate their respect for basic human values by ratifying the conventions on human rights. We feel entitled to make such an appeal. Uruguay was one of the first countries to ratify the International Covenants on human rights and one of the few to accept the competence of the Committee to look into the complaints of individuals who had been victims of their violation. Moreover, Uruguay has not only ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, but was the first State to accept the competence of the relevant Committee.

(President Sanguinetti)

All of us who, in one way or another, took part in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy know what sacrifices, patience and dedication were necessary to ensure that such a transition took place peacefully. But, great as the effort demanded by the restoration of democracy may have been, it was no greater than that which its maintenance is now requiring from us.

Democracy is a fragile flower; we have ample and all too frequent proof of its fragile nature. It only grows and survives in the right soil and the right climate. A genuine democracy based on respect for the individual and on the periodical, free advice of the people can be preserved only within an economic context that allows its citizens to provide for their basic material and spiritual needs. In other words, the close link between democracy and economic development must be recognized. When this condition is not fulfilled and poverty and unemployment prevail, violence emerges and is unleashed, the sowers of disorder take advantage of the fertile soil, the fabric of society disintegrates and, in the international sphere, political loyalties become erratic.

This does not mean that we in any way deny the formal operation of democracy, which is always a substantial guarantee that rights will be respected, but, inasmuch as the formal operation of democracy is a necessary condition of the existence of such rights, it is not sufficient to ensure its stability. It is our duty to ensure that our people can enjoy the basic conditions for growth and development, not only for reasons of honour - since it places its trust in us and we must comply with its will - or for humanitarian motives alone - considering, as we do, that the assurance of a full life is a fundamental right - but also because we must ensure peace, since we love life and cast in our lot with it. "A hungry people," said Seneca, "does not listen to reason, is not pacified by justice, does not yield to entreaties."

(President Sanguinetti)

The stability of democratic institutions is seriously threatened in many developing countries. The threat is real, grave and current. We who are responsible for steering the destiny of those countries are conscious of the gravity of the situation and of the fact that we have to make enormous efforts in terms of work and austerity.

We cannot ignore the fact that, in order to correct this alarming situation, we must rely on ourselves and use our own resources. Let us not deceive ourselves; the strength that will enable us to surmount the obstacles to our development is also to be found above all within ourselves. A vigorous and bold attitude on the part of both our public and our private sectors is necessary to drive and guide this strength and mobilize the available resources.

If Uruguay and Latin America as a whole wish to deal with the present situation speedily they must make an unprecedented effort in which the overall consensus on certain fundamental problems must take priority over domestic contradictions, divisive quarrels or sterile ideological disputes.

However, we fully realize that our efforts, although indispensable, are not enough. It is our fate to live in a world in which international relations are beset by unprecedented difficulties. Our economies are affected by external factors that are beyond our control. Interest rates, which are still high, together with falling prices for our export products create situations that put a stranglehold on our balance of payments. In addition, we carry the burden of our foreign debt, the servicing of which, in present circumstances holds back any dynamic trend in our economies. The countries of Latin America face an unprecedented situation arising from the astronomical dimensions of their debts. They are thus caught in a spiralling process, in which each turn makes the possibility of repayment more remote.

(President Sanguinetti)

How have we reached such a situation? There is no need to repeat the history of the economic misadventures of the developing countries, but here in the General Assembly we must once again point out something which at this juncture is obvious, and that is that the creditor countries are also responsible for the disastrous situation afflicting the debtor countries and that a large part of the responsibility for its solution rests with them.

It is short sighted and insensitive to believe that the only factors that have placed the debtor developing countries in this vertiginous spiral of debt that generates further debt are lack of responsibility on the part of those countries, their poor administration and their lack of foresight. We are faced with a situation that is imbued with tragic contradictions, not the least of which is that the creditor institutions and countries that demand payment of the debt and its interest are the same ones that, with their protectionist policies, their discriminatory measures and their subsidies, close off all the possibilities that the debtors have of generating the necessary resources to repay their debt.

If the industrialized countries persist in denying the real origin and nature of these problems, if they do not shoulder their share of responsibility for the situation that prevails in the developing world, if they do not become less inflexible with regard to just demands for more equitable treatment, all our sacrifice will be a forlorn, wasted effort and there will be no reason for optimism regarding the survival of democracy.

We do not expect acts of charity; we do not encourage anachronistic moratoriums. We ask for better trade; we ask for more technology; we ask to be allowed to sell in order to be able to pay and fulfil our obligations. We wish to grow in order to be able to pay, because we reject the alternative of paying and renouncing growth, just as we know that to ignore debts only leads to irresponsibility.

(President Sanguinetti)

These statements are made by Uruguay, a country which has just renegotiated its debt under the best conditions that can be expected in the present situation. We do not look at the problem, therefore, under the emotional influence of resentment. On the contrary, with the ease of mind provided by the long repayment periods obtained, we try to analyse it in historical perspective, over the long run and from the viewpoint of a legitimate mutuality of concerns.

(President Sanguinetti)

We thus consider that the fact that the creditor countries have not understood or have not wished to understand the real essence of the foreign debt problem, together with the obstacles that they set up against trade with the developing countries, the lack of results in the North-South dialogue, the reluctance with which the principles of the new international economic order are accepted and applied, can only lead to a deep sense of frustration on the part of the developing countries.

I do not believe that it is healthy for any of the sections into which the world is divided to continue this dialogue of the deaf, where the only outcome has been to ease the guilty conscience of some and to offer only false and shallow remedies for the needs of others.

The proclamation of the principles of the new international economic order and the subsequent attempts to make some of those principles a reality raised great expectations in international forums. But let us not be deceived. The new international economic order is for the time being simply a rhetorical listing of good intentions.

The terms of trade of Latin America have deteriorated by 20 per cent during this decade, and in this very year, 1985, the continent is prey to a new decline in prices. It already seems quite probable that the drop in prices of raw materials in 1985 will mean a loss of export income for the region as a whole of close to \$10 billion.

In the meantime, Latin America must continue to make new net transfers of resources abroad of nearly \$30 billion, in addition to the \$70 billion of the last three years.

In terms of our small country, this has meant that so far during 1985, all the prices of our raw materials have dropped by about 10 per cent, in addition to the sharp drop suffered during the decade as a whole.

(President Sanguinetti)

Traditional markets for our meats are being closed to us because of the ruinous competition from highly subsidized meat being exported by the European Economic Community (EEC) countries. Our exports of industrial products based on the agriculture and livestock sector are threatened or excluded by all kinds of protectionist barriers.

Does anybody believe that under these circumstances we can achieve a peaceful social climate and the conditions necessary to lay the foundations of economic development?

I trust that those countries whose level of economic, political and social evolution ensures that they obtain the greater share of the benefits of progress will understand that if they adopt an attitude based less on national short-term interests and more on common long-term interests, they themselves will benefit. Surely it is more to their advantage to coexist with nations that have prosperous economies and stable governments, that are active markets, sure sources of supply and friendly partners, rather than be surrounded, as they now are, by States that are plunging towards insolvency and that bear within them the seeds of misery and of its inescapable corollary, violence?

As Montesquieu said, "An injustice to one is a threat to all."

Any opportunity to negotiate is welcome. But it will also be useless if all that the developed countries seek in the negotiations is to consolidate their positions of power, or if we, the developing countries, only use them as a pulpit for spreading ideologies or for making Utopian claims, instead of putting forward realistic demands or exchanging concessions on an equitable basis.

We, the people of the developing world, must act more pragmatically and be aware that our solidarity has not yet developed sufficiently to be able to impose our conditions on those with whom we are dealing. We cannot expect gratuitous concessions. We must insist on our demands, but not expect too much from the

(President Sanguinetti)

generosity of others. We must be radical in our principles but moderate in applying them.

At the same time we should place greater stress on the possibilities that co-operation among equals can open up. We are convinced that if we were to put more energy and more imagination into managing our relations with countries that are in a situation similar to ours, either within our region or even elsewhere, we might find new avenues of progress. By intensifying or expanding co-operation with other developing countries, we can reduce the contradictions in our own economies.

Latin America is, with a few exceptions, self-sufficient in terms of most of our commodities. However, despite the existence of areas and subregions with excess production, and others that cannot meet their own needs, there is not enough intraregional trade.

During the last few years, only a fifth of the total value of commodity imports - including oil - came from Latin America. The Latin American region, for example, exported \$7,300 million worth of food in 1982, of which only \$730 million worth went to other countries in the region.

The value of its oil exports in 1982 amounted to \$48 billion, of which only \$5 billion were intraregional exports, while oil imports from the rest of the world amounted to \$26 billion. In view of the severe external restrictions which our countries face, the fact that we are buying abroad the very same goods that we are producing within our own borders is a sign that we have failed to organize trade that it will provide us the greatest possible benefits.

Consequently, we must stimulate economic integration among our countries. There must be more trade, more technical assistance, more transfer of technology, more co-operation in the areas of education and scientific research, more projects to establish multinational corporations, greater policy co-ordination, at the subregional, regional, continental or intercontinental level, in all areas in which

(President Sanguinetti)

we have common interests. All these are channels which have not been sufficiently explored, that may open up new prospects for emerging from our economic stagnation.

In this regard, I would like to call to mind the exercise in co-ordination and consultation that we, the debtor countries of Latin America, are carrying out through the Cartagena group with the purpose of negotiating collectively with our creditors on such a problem as that of the foreign debt which, has taken on a predominantly political dimension that requires a political solution, and that can no longer be dealt with simply as a mere relationship of a legal-financial nature between debtors and creditors.

In this regard, we welcome and firmly support what the Secretary-General has stressed in his annual report to the General Assembly, to wit, that in recent years economic, financial, monetary and trade issues have become so interrelated and are of such profound political and social importance that they can only be dealt with effectively as part of a wider political process.

We shall insist on that aspect of this problem, which in the long run will have to be accepted by industrialized countries. On this problem Latin America must be regarded and listened to as a united group. This does not imply a club of insolvent debtors seeking to reduce the amount or extend the term of their debts. No, a political focus has two meanings: one, that the merits of acting as a hemisphere be recognized; the other, that it be understood that the debt will be paid by means of growth and exports. Growth only comes about with investment. This implies receiving investments, and recycling into productive activities some of our savings from reducing the servicing of these liabilities. The aim of this political focus is not to default on our obligations or confront the financial system, but rather to seek a solution to the problem which, in the existing situation and with our usual resources, our countries will be unable to cope with in the long run, except at the price of chaos.

(President Sanguinetti)

Together with investment growth, however, we also need to increase our exports. In this regard we must be quite plain. The foreign debt problem is indissolubly linked to the trade problem.

If the prices of our raw materials continue to decline, if the present protectionist barriers remain unchanged, if the present new trends, which auguring the dangers of an undeclared trade war with outdated and suicidal protectionist policies, are confirmed, there will be no lasting solution to the debt problem and the whole edifice that we have tried to build with our post-war institutions may fall and pave the way to a world of stagnation or uncontrollable crises.

(President Sanguinetti)

We also wish to be among the driving forces of world growth. Let us be allowed to produce; give us the resources with which to strengthen our capacity for investment and productive modernization; open up the doors to our export capacity, and the debt problem will be just one more financial problem on our agenda.

Those are the essential terms of the problem; if today we were to imagine for an instant that foreign debt had magically disappeared, we would still not have found the solution to the roots of the problem. We would only have found incidental relief: that of maintaining the present international conditions of trade and investment flows. Within a decade we would surely witness a renewal of the same critical problems of today.

To view foreign debt as a purely economic problem is as mistaken as to view the crisis in Central America as a purely political problem. Central America has lately become the stage of a tragedy where violence is manifest in all its forms: civil wars, conflicts across borders, terrorism, repression.

How can we stop this infernal process that destroys lives, well-being and wealth, and that continues to inflict indescribable suffering on the peoples of that region, who deserve a better fate?

Basically, the problem is deeply rooted, going way back beyond the time when the present Governments or political systems were established. The disease afflicting Central America is one that will not be cured if attention is not paid to its deeper causes - both political, economic and social. Within a context in which poverty and backwardness prevail in most sectors of the population that have traditionally been left on the sidelines by dynasties and elites, ideological aggression finds fertile ground.

But to persist in viewing the Central American crisis as a crisis of an exclusively political and ideological nature is a mistake fraught with tragic

(President Sanguinetti)

consequences. Likewise, it would be a mistake to ignore the way in which these tragedies are exploited politically, or to think that there must be some lasting solution that is not based on strict observance of the principles held in greatest regard by the political traditions of Latin America, namely, non-intervention, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States, non-use of force and non-use of the territory of one State to undermine the sovereignty and independence of another, wherever it may be, in Latin America or elsewhere, in America or in another continent.

We believe that, at this time, the Contadora Group offers the most appropriate path to resolve the crisis. For this reason we have fully supported it and we have decided to contribute to its consolidation together with other sister countries of the region, as a mechanism through which peace in the region may be restored. But the work of the Contadora Group will be completely sterile if there is no change in the attitude of the countries involved in the crisis.

We urge the latter to soften their attitudes based on preconceived ideas and prejudice, and to marshal their will to respond to what their respective peoples demand and need - that is to say, purely and simply, peace.

I wish to remind those Governments - every one of them - that when they seek to satisfy their national interests without consulting the interests of others and without applying the basic standards of ethics and international law, their victories are short-lived and, ultimately, will not offset the damages suffered. Anecdotal history, as presented by newspaper or newsreel reports, radio and television, can extol the apparent but incidental successes obtained through pressure, the use of force or demagogy. However, the history that endures is very unremitting and will not be deceived, and it records and extols only those who respect the will of the people and struggle to meet their needs and aspirations.

(President Sanguinetti)

There are other disorders that afflict Latin America. Some are peculiar to itself and cannot be transferred, such as the many unresolved border disputes, fuelled by immature and anachronistic visions of nationalism which eventually serve only to support arms races, with their devastating effects on our institutions.

Others must be viewed in a different context, such as that in the subregion of which my country is a part - the South Atlantic, which was ravaged by war more than three years ago. The problem of the Malvinas is not simply a bilateral problem between Argentina and Great Britain. It is a Latin American problem and, as such, we assume it in its full dimension. The permanent British presence in the Malvinas ignores one of the principles which were the basis of the political organization of the Ibero-American continent, the principle of utipossidetis, which was formulated and applied on the continent long before Great Britain's de facto occupation of the Malvinas which had the effect, precisely, of not allowing any American territory to remain unclaimed and open to occupation by extra-continental Powers.

We trust that Great Britain, which knew when the historical moment was ripe to abandon vast possessions all over the world, will succeed in reconciling the dictates of law with the rules of international coexistence. Hence we support Argentina's claims and we are prepared to do everything in our power to contribute to a rapprochement between those two parties at the negotiating table.

Uruguay, the product of the same genealogy as that of Argentina, is convinced of the justice of its position; it has maintained historical ties of co-operation with Great Britain, sealed in brotherhood during the Second World War; and it appeals in this forum to the two parties to find solutions to a situation which cannot remain unchanged without peril to us all.

We are all aware of the long list of situations and conflicts that endanger in

(President Sanguinetti)

world peace and security. Small States, such as Uruguay, are powerless witnesses to the tragedy of subjugated States, of nations torn apart and of peoples victimized by ideological wars and by expansionist ambitions. In the case of the Middle East conflict the worst has happened: it has become a routine problem; we have learned to live with it. In the meantime, millions of human beings are experiencing insecurity, fear and exile. We believe that it is time for all those directly affected by the situation in the Middle East to accept the notion that there will be no prospects for a lasting peace while there are parties who insist on not recognizing Israel's right to existence as a State, while the need to establish safe and recognized borders is not acknowledged, and while the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is not recognized, without the constant coercion of forces that only raise their flags for their own advantage. Moreover, peace in the region will not be secured if the independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon is not reaffirmed and respected. Its territory must be freed from the presence of foreign armed forces, regardless of their origin.

Afghanistan, Kampuchea, the Iran-Iraq war, the situation of Namibia and of the majority of the people of South Africa - all are situations that are not consistent with what the Governments involved state in international forums. It is tragic to perceive the deep gap between the world of words and proclamations heard in this forum and the world of reality. This gap is illustrated by the appeals for peace and the declarations insisting on the need for disarmament and the need to create an international atmosphere conducive to confidence and security that are made by the very same States that have embarked upon an arms race of colossal dimensions.

(President Sanguinetti)

Let us not be content with our actions. Our children, surely, will have much to reproach us for and may never be able to forgive the omissions which are so prevalent. I propose that we discard the assumption of self-satisfaction and apply, in its place, Albert Einstein's maxim, "The most grievous fault is not to be aware of any fault."

The arms craze, which is taking on interplanetary dimensions, is the worst threat that hovers over the collective aspirations of our peoples and the individual happiness of their members.

It is a threat that makes us feel that we are not the masters of our destiny, which remains entirely in the hands of the ruling elites of the great Powers. It is stupefying to think that there are 50,000 nuclear warheads ready to be detonated, while the use of a small fraction of such an arsenal is more than sufficient to cause disasters, loss of life and catastrophic damage to the environment.

Perhaps the most tragic contradiction of the world we live in is that if the budget that finances that lethal fraction were to be earmarked, not for the massive construction of artefacts for destruction and death, but rather for co-operation and aid, the lives of millions of human beings who are suffering and dying of hunger at this very moment in the desolate lands of Africa could be saved, and disease and ignorance could be eradicated in the American continent.

One is justified in hoping that those responsible for the warlike escalation will have a moment of supreme enlightenment which will lead them to put a stop to this suicidal race and devote to life a part of the resources, talents and energy that they now devote to death.

The world is at present going through a period that is as disturbing as it is promising.

(President Sanguinetti)

Never before, since the post-war period, have we been shaken by so much uncertainty regarding the future, by so many threats to peace, which is being violated systematically in many corners of the earth and exposed every day to the risk of a nuclear holocaust, by so much ambivalence regarding the economic situation, by the tragic persistence of irritating differences between the rich world of the North and the poor world of the South, by so much racial, religious and nationalist strife, by the widespread daily presence of insane terrorism of all types.

As we face this situation, so often denounced and so often ignored, we view with similar apprehension the breaking-up of a whole edifice of multilateral organizations established to defend solidarity among men and nations, organizations that today are weaker than they have ever been since the post-war period and, in some cases, under serious threat of extinction.

The present state of international relations is not a cause for optimism regarding the future of the human race. But optimism is not a rational sentiment: in these sombre times it is the nutrient the spirit needs to continue living. Thus it was for us, even during the most difficult hours of the long night that lay over our country for more than a decade, during which freedoms were lost and happiness disappeared from our land. But time justified those of us who waited with faith; reason, commonsense and the instinct of coexistence finally prevailed. Power was returned to the people with not a drop of blood shed, and the democratic institutions recovered their status and their authority.

Our specific experience, very much our own, leads us to aver that if Uruguay was able to find its way peacefully back to democracy, it was because there were people who thought that peace would not come alone, that peace was not simply the result of abstaining from violence, that peace was a valuable political endeavour which required action, struggle and strategy.

(President Sanguinetti)

In Latin America we have returned to democratic life. During this year both Uruguay and Brazil have done so, following the course taken earlier by Argentina.

We have seen the consolidation of the Peruvian and Bolivian processes, despite the threats that the wrathful unleashed against both sister countries.

We have hailed an exemplary peace agreement regarding the borders between Argentina and Chile. This is proof of a prospect for hope, which in turn makes co-operation in the region our duty: and we wish to state here and now that we are doing our duty, that we are already doing it in the political, cultural and commercial spheres and that we wish to continue to do it, with neither aggressive nor resentful feelings towards anyone. We know that a lasting peace will not be on a firm footing until democracy prevails in all our countries, because it is the only way to avoid the interference of alien dogmatisms and interests.

As Uruguayans we cast our lot with peace, as well as with change, the conferring of dignity on work and life, and the new approaches that the end of the century is already requiring of us. But, above all, we cast our lot with peace, which is nothing less than a means of achieving freedom and development. "Revolutions," Bertold Brecht advised so correctly, "occur at dead ends." That will not happen in Uruguay where all the channels of understanding and comprehension are open, open within the country and open towards the rest of the world.

You may be sure that Uruguay will sow only seeds of harmony.

In closing, I wish to convey to this Assembly a deep feeling of shared pain and brotherly hope. Shared pain regarding the tragedy which has cast the people of Mexico, our noble brothers, into mourning. Its tragedy is the tragedy of America as a whole. I wish to reiterate that my country, within the context of its modest strength, wishes to be on the frontline of solidarity and support for Mexico,

(President Sanguinetti)

which is so greatly admired and to which our people owe a debt of imperishable gratitude for the noble and generous way in which it remained at our side during the past years when so many Uruguayans found in Mexico a brotherly haven.

But I also wish to express a feeling of hope. Mexico always reaps growth from its adversities. That has been its history and that will be its present. It is for this reason that, faced with this pain, we must pay tribute - and this is my final word here - to the cry of hope that has endured throughout the history of this nation: Long live Mexico!

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. VAYRYNEN (Finland): It is most appropriate, Sir, that at its fortieth session the General Assembly should be presided over by a diplomat who is as experienced in international affairs and as skilful in the business of the United Nations as you. I wish to congratulate you warmly and to assure you of the co-operation of the delegation of Finland in your challenging task. May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to our outgoing President, Ambassador Paul Lusaka, for his distinguished service.

I wish to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the people and Government of Finland, our deepest condolences to the people and Government of Mexico for the devastating natural catastrophe that recently occurred in their country.

In commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and, at the same time, the thirtieth anniversary of Finland's membership, my Government wishes to reaffirm its full support for the purposes and principles of the Charter and for the strengthening of the United Nations as an organization. We are grateful for the annual report of the Secretary-General, in which he wisely emphasizes that international co-operation is not a choice for the nations of the world, but a necessity. We entirely concur.

For 40 years, the United Nations has stood at the centre of mankind's aspirations for a more secure and just world order. For 40 years, the United Nations has fulfilled its main task - that of maintaining international peace and security. While there have been many local and regional conflicts, the world has been spared a conflict on the scale of the Second World War.

In the course of the past four decades, economic and social problems have come to occupy an increasingly prominent place among global concerns. One after another,

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

peoples that were not free in 1945 have assumed their right to self-determination. The membership of the United Nations has more than tripled. Today, the agenda of the Organization reflects the foremost concerns of the majority of its present membership.

While the world has changed greatly in the past 40 years, so have the challenges mankind faces. There is the challenge of halting and reversing the mindless arms race, particularly in nuclear arms. There is the challenge of new frontiers of human endeavour, above all that of outer space. Space holds great promise for mankind, yet it may become an arena of unprecedented peril. There is the challenge of saving our environment, maintaining the natural infrastructure without which human life on Earth is impossible. And there is the challenge of survival and development, of ensuring basic needs and better standards of living for the hundreds of millions who today live in misery. While these challenges are awesome, mankind is in a better position than ever before to meet them. A new kind of interdependence among nations and issues, as well as rapid technological advances, represent a potential that should be tapped for the benefit of all.

The commemorative session offers a timely opportunity to discuss these and other common concerns of mankind and to assess the role of the United Nations in managing them. As the only universally representative forum, the United Nations system is in a unique position in this regard. The presence of many Heads of State or Government at that session testifies to the importance they attach to such an opportunity. The President of Finland is one of them.

Speaking about the world situation from this rostrum one year ago, I saw little reason for optimism. Uncertainty and even hostility characterized international relations. Since that time, the atmosphere has improved and dialogue has been rediscovered. This gives us reason to expect a positive change.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

The Government of Finland has welcomed the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space arms begun in Geneva earlier this year. These talks between the two Powers with preponderant military might offer the best chance of curbing the arms race in those areas where it matters most for the preservation of peace - indeed, for the very survival of mankind. They should, as the mandate says, result in effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space, terminating it on earth, limiting and reducing nuclear arms and strengthening strategic stability.

Arms control efforts are an integral part of international politics. Periods of reduced confrontation have been more congenial to arms control efforts. Impulses originating at the highest political level have often been necessary to narrow differences in views and to prepare the ground for negotiations. The meeting of the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva in November is, in our view, a welcome opportunity for dialogue in the interests of peace and international security.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

Only a few days ago, at the Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, an overwhelming majority of Member States reaffirmed their conviction that the Treaty is the most important instrument in the pursuit of basic security interests of the international community. The Final Declaration approved unanimously by the parties to the Treaty confirms that its three main goals remain valid: preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, developing the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and working towards nuclear disarmament.

While the responsibilities of those who possess nuclear weapons are great, international security is also a collective responsibility. The United Nations Charter and the Organization founded upon it are our joint recognition of that fundamental fact.

The broad concept of security enshrined in the Charter finds regional expression in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The recent meeting in Helsinki commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Final Act demonstrated, at a high political level, the continued commitment of the signatory States to the CSCE process. One subject of discussion at the tenth anniversary meeting holds particular promise for lessening the risk of military conflict in Europe. The Stockholm Conference needs to show that militarily significant confidence- and security-building measures are achievable. That would make it possible to broaden its horizons to include an even more ambitious goal, that of curbing armaments on the continent with the heaviest concentration of weapons. The CSCE process provides for all the participating States an important forum in which to pursue a policy of co-operation as outlined in the Helsinki Final Act. Finland has consistently given its active support to these endeavours and, in so doing, served its own interests as well. In its immediate vicinity, the region of northern Europe, Finland will persevere in its

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

efforts to maintain basic stability. Consolidating the absence of nuclear weapons from the territories of the Nordic countries through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would make a signal contribution to that stability.

Among the challenges of our time the use of outer space is a far-reaching and complex issue. Finland deeply believes in the goal expressed in the space Treaty of 1967: space should be used for peaceful purposes to benefit mankind as a whole. My Government has consistently supported the work on outer space that has been carried out within the United Nations system over the years. Now that new technologies are making the economic utilization of space even more attractive and now that more countries, including mine, are interested in these possibilities, the time has come to think about a more comprehensive approach to the use and management of this resource. This should most properly be undertaken under United Nations auspices.

At the same time, there is a growing risk that outer space may become a new arena for military competition. Finland is gravely concerned over such an eventuality. It was most welcome that the General Assembly last year came to an agreement which provides the basis for considering within the Conference on Disarmament the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. In addition, the United States and the Soviet Union have committed themselves at their negotiations in Geneva to seeking agreements on this issue.*

Co-operation in the field of environmental protection has developed in an encouraging manner during recent years. The United Nations Environment Programme has since its foundation done valuable work in the field of environmental protection. Its role as the main organization responsible for United Nations

*Mr. Gutierrez (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

activities in this field should be further strengthened. But, although the challenge is now better understood, the threat has not abated. In Europe valuable conventions have been concluded relating to the reduction of long-range transboundary air pollution and to the protection of the marine environment. In other regions of the world also, agreements have been concluded. There is a close interdependence between economic development and the state of the environment. No country can afford to ignore the deterioration of the ecological infrastructure. The Government of Finland urges the adoption, unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally, of stringent measures to save our common environment. The environment is a shared responsibility.

The situation in South Africa is rapidly deteriorating. Violence and bloodshed are increasing. The state of emergency recently proclaimed by the South African Government has intensified the conflict between the Government and the majority of the South African people. Only the abolition of apartheid, together with the recognition of the civil and political rights of all South Africans, can provide the basis for a peaceful and democratic evolution of South African society. Demands for the intensification of pressure against South Africa have been repeatedly made. This was again reflected in the recommendations included in Security Council resolution 569 (1985). It is essential that the Security Council decide on effective mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

At the same time, the international community as a whole has an urgent need for concerted action to secure an end to apartheid. It is our wish that the draft resolution on this issue to be introduced during this General Assembly session will receive the unanimous support of Member States. In March this year, the Nordic Foreign Ministers decided to strengthen and expand the Nordic Joint Programme of Action against South Africa adopted in 1978. New measures are at present being

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

discussed among the Nordic Governments. A revised programme will be adopted at the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers, in October. On the part of the Government of Finland, further measures to increase pressure against the South African Government have been under fresh review, and new legislation to this end is shortly to be introduced. The Finnish Government has also decided to widen significantly its co-operation with the members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference so as to help the countries of the region to become less dependent on South Africa. Our direct and indirect assistance to the liberation movements and oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia will also be further increased.

At this moment there is a special reason to re-emphasize that Namibia is a unique responsibility of the United Nations. Only a week ago South Africa committed an armed invasion of Angola, apparently in order to frustrate the efforts to implement Security Council resolutions 385 (1976) and 435 (1978).

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

Finland welcomes the unanimous condemnation, in resolution 571 (1985), by the Security Council of this act of aggression against a sovereign country. Earlier in June, after a lengthy pause, the Security Council reaffirmed the United Nations Plan for the Independence of Namibia in its resolution 566 (1985). The resolution confirmed the unconditional commitment of the international community to the Plan. The Council also condemned South Africa for its refusal to abide by the decisions of the Council, and warned South Africa that sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter would be imposed if it persisted in its policy of illegal occupation of Namibia. In this anniversary year it is for the United Nations to make a firm commitment to implement its Plan, as universally accepted. The General Assembly, in its resolutions, can do nothing less than send a clear, effective and unequivocal message to South Africa on an early independence of Namibia without further pre-conditions.

The Government of Finland remains convinced that the basis for a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel must withdraw from Arab territories occupied since 1967. Acquisition of territories by force is inadmissible. The right of Israel and all other States in the area to exist within secure and recognized boundaries must be guaranteed. Furthermore, provision must be made for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to national self-determination. This presupposes the right of the Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the most significant representative of Palestinian national aspirations, to participate in negotiations on their own future within a comprehensive solution to the conflict.

Finland has given its support to proposals and initiatives that contribute to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East through negotiation. We hope that the latest initiatives will speed up the process towards a negotiated settlement.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

My Government is greatly distressed at the continued violence in Lebanon. The unique opportunity presented by withdrawal of Israeli forces did not bring about a credible ceasefire between the internal parties in southern Lebanon, nor did it restore the authority of the Lebanese Government in that region. We believe that agreement between the warring factions is the only way to save Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. The territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries must be strictly respected.

By taking a balanced and conciliatory position on the various controversial issues in the Middle East, Finland maintains good relations with all parties concerned. A tangible expression of our policy towards the Middle East is the contribution which Finland is making to United Nations peace-keeping activities in that area.

The United Nations and its peace-keeping operations play a vital role, often under difficult circumstances, in creating favourable conditions for a peaceful political solution. In order to be successful, peace-keeping operations require an authorization given by the Security Council - an authorization which is implementable - and full co-operation of the parties concerned. The incident last June where Finnish soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were taken hostage raises fundamental questions of principle. A new effort to work out unambiguous and realistic guidelines covering all aspects of United Nations peace-keeping operations should be made.

In Central America, a lasting solution to the problems can only be arrived at through dialogue and negotiation based on the priorities and concerns of the States of the region, their sovereignty and their territorial integrity. Finland supports wholeheartedly the efforts of the Contadora Group toward a peaceful and comprehensive solution. We welcome the increasing support for the Contadora process elsewhere in Latin America.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

Persistent problems of development remain on our agenda. Despite efforts by the international community during more than three decades, the plight of many poor countries has not been eased. Difficulties accumulate upon the poorest of the poor, making survival, not development, their major challenge. Changing this trend is our collective responsibility.

The economic crisis in Africa is a tragic demonstration of the severity of these problems. Millions are still faced with famine and death. World Bank forecasts suggest that even in the most favourable circumstances, per capita growth in Africa will be negative until at least 1995. This outlook is a challenge to the entire international community. Present policies are simply not enough.

Any significant improvement requires concerted action. All should contribute to efforts aimed at creating an international economic environment more conducive to policy reform and sustained development. The developing countries themselves bear the main responsibility for their own development and for ensuring the efficient use of the resources at their disposal. This notion is one of the cornerstones of the Third International Development Strategy and has been repeatedly acknowledged by the developing countries themselves. The role of the industrialized countries is to support the efforts of the developing countries by providing adequate assistance. Above all, the flow of concessional assistance to the developing countries is more important than ever.

In 1977, I was able to declare from this rostrum that my Government had decided to double the gross national product share of our official development assistance funds during the period of five years. That pledge was kept, and in 1984, for the first time, Finland reached the average level of development assistance among the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).*

*The President returned to the chair.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

In July of this year, the Government of Finland took a policy decision by which it committed itself to a substantial increase in its official development assistance in 1986 and 1987, with a view to reaching the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by the end of this decade. This decision is fully reflected in the budget bill now before our Parliament. My Government is backed in this matter by an active public opinion.

Increasing the volume of aid is necessary, but it is not enough. All aid must be judged by the results it produces. The primary purpose of development co-operation is to achieve sustained economic and social progress in recipient countries. Other motives must be subordinated to this primary concern. An international recommitment to this principle is called for. More can be achieved with the resources invested in development co-operation. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its recent achievements give ample evidence of this. It is the responsibility of donors and recipients alike to ensure that these resources are used effectively.

A new and integral approach is needed, one which takes population, natural resources, the environment and technology into account in the process of development. Human resources, the key element of sustained development, urgently need increased attention. The administrative and absorptive capacities of the developing countries must be strengthened in order to help them manage their own development.

The process of development is basically the same in all societies. The economy can be developed only step by step. There are no easy shortcuts to higher levels of well-being. In the first place, a people's basic means of livelihood must be assured and sustained. This requires that priority be given to food production, education and health. It is encouraging to note that many developing countries have adopted this approach as a basis for their own development policies.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

The world is living through an age of rapid technological change, through a new technological revolution with profound consequences for all societies. These new technologies pose new challenges and open up new prospects also for developing countries. The latest achievements of technology make it possible to adopt modes of production which cause less social and ecological strain than the conventional technologies of industrialized societies. It is our common responsibility to ensure that developing countries can benefit from technological advances and that they can avoid repeating certain negative features of development experienced in the industrialized countries.

Despite the complexities of development, the international community cannot evade its responsibilities by claiming that no solutions are available. We have sufficient experience to attack the problems of development. More realism, higher ambitions and an open dialogue between the North and the South are called for.

The Charter of the United Nations established respect for and promotion of human rights as one of the principles of the Organization. During its 40 years of existence, the United Nations, together with its Member States, has made great progress in the codification of human rights, whether defined in terms of political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, action against racism or the general development of the international bill of human rights. Finland welcomed the adoption by consensus by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms remains inadequate. Violations of human rights are the rule rather than the exception. Yet all Member States have undertaken a solemn commitment to promote and respect human rights. Observance of human rights is not an option, but an obligation.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

We envisage a great task for all countries in promoting and implementing human rights both nationally and internationally. Progress in this task will help to strengthen the rule of law and to build a durable world order in peace and security.

The world conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, held at Nairobi two months ago, was a significant step towards full equality between women and men at all levels and in all spheres of life. The adoption without a vote of the final document on forward-looking strategies to improve the status of women to the year 2000 was a successful conclusion of the United Nations Decade for Women. Global, regional and national mechanisms for advancing the status of women have been constituted. That process must be carried on.

The General Assembly has designated this year as International Youth Year. The Year aims at focusing international attention on issues of interest to young people and on their aspirations, problems and concerns. During the Year, these issues have been highlighted all over the world. In order to improve their position, young people themselves should become more active, not only at the national level, but internationally as well. The active participation of youth awakens new hope and brings renewed energy to the affairs of societies and to the international community.

The United Nations is an organization for the future, for our children and for our youth. Today, young people are confronted with a world plagued by many serious problems. However, there exists a universal and strong will among the peoples of the world to overcome these problems and to provide a better future for coming generations. This will should be fully reflected in our work at the United Nations.

(Mr. Vayrynen, Finland)

Forty years ago, the peoples of the United Nations committed themselves in the Charter to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security. Today, on behalf of the people and the Government of Finland, I renew that pledge. By pursuing our policy of neutrality we wish to serve the international community for the benefit of peace, security and development.

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Sir, permit me first of all to congratulate you upon your election to the high post of President of the United Nations General Assembly for the fortieth session and to wish you success in your work.

I should like to address the delegation of Mexico, whose country has suffered such a terrible natural disaster, entailing heavy loss of life and tremendous destruction. On behalf of the Soviet leadership and on behalf of all the Soviet people, we should like once again to convey to the Government and people of Mexico our most profound condolences.

Four decades have gone by since the victory of the freedom-loving peoples over German fascism and Japanese militarism. The United Nations, whose birth was the natural result of that great victory and whose work has represented the world's major hope for preventing new wars, has now been in existence for 40 years.

Today it can be stated with great satisfaction that those have been 40 years without a world war. In that period truly gigantic changes have taken place in the world. These changes include the establishment and development of the world socialist system - a system of States whose very political and social nature excludes the possibility of any interest in war. All the practical activities of the countries of the socialist community in the international arena are based on the policy of the peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems. The role of socialism in world affairs has been steadily increasing.

Over an extremely short historical span of time the hurricane of the peoples' liberation struggle has destroyed and eliminated from the face of the earth the colonial system of imperialism. Over 100 new States have emerged from its ruins. Today they are full-fledged Members of the United Nations.

The forces that are at work to strengthen peace and prevent war are constantly growing. At present their struggle involves people of all continents, of all generations and occupations, and with the most diverse political beliefs.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The past 40 years have been a period of rapid progress in the scientific and technological revolution, which is not only drastically changing our concepts of the structure of the universe and of matter itself but is also creating ever broader opportunities for meeting the spiritual and material needs of every individual and of all mankind. Even today the achievements of science, if they are used for constructive purposes, make it possible to resolve almost any economic problem. However, they can also generate unprecedented dangers whenever they are used for developing means of annihilation and destruction.

In the complex and rapidly changing world of today, which is the scene of a continuing struggle between the forces of progress and the forces of reaction, between the forces of the future and those of the past, the development of relations among States, including the major Powers possessing the greatest military potential, has followed a changing and at times zigzag course. Aggravations of international tension have alternated with periods when that tension abated; international crises have sprung up and have been overcome, some of them being so acute as to bring mankind to the verge of catastrophe. It would be fair to say that many a time when the international barometer has forecast a storm the United Nations has raised its voice in warning and has been able to take practical steps to reduce the threat.

The greatest hopes for stable peace emerged in the 1970s, which went down in history as the decade of détente. Détente was based on the general recognition that it was inadmissible in the nuclear age to seek to attain political and ideological goals by means of war and that the policy of achieving the military superiority of some States over others or of one social system over another was wrong and dangerous.

The countries of the socialist community and many other States have every right to take pride in having been the architects and engineers of détente. Yet in

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

the late 1970s and early 1980s the world once again witnessed a stepping up of the activities of the forces which never supported the policy of détente and are now seeking to undo its most important accomplishments. As a result, much of the system of international relations is out of joint and the risk of war has sharply increased.

My delegation wishes to set forth the views of the Soviet Union regarding the reasons for the current unfavourable development of the situation in the world and ways of remedying the existing state of affairs. It can be remedied only if there is an understanding, as has been pointed out by Mikhail S. Gorbachev, of the "realities and the dangers which we will inevitably face tomorrow if today those who can and must take the only correct decision evade the responsibility incumbent on them".

We perceive the greatest peril in the fact that the nuclear arms race has, at it were, made a fresh start and is forging ahead. Added to this there is the threat of the arms race spreading to outer space. There is a great possibility of the arms race acquiring an uncontrollable and irreversible character. In the final analysis, this is the road leading to a nuclear catastrophe.

It is also alarming that of late it has not been possible to settle a single regional conflict or to eliminate a single hotbed of military tension. In the meantime the flames of "local" wars, more often than not undeclared, have been responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands, and indeed hundreds of thousands. Mankind is suffering through being denied the opportunity to deal with such urgent problems as those relating to food, ecology, energy, population and the constantly widening economic gap between the developed and the developing countries. It has been denied that opportunity because the intellectual and material resources needed to find a radical solution to these problems common to all mankind are being squandered on the arms race.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Not a single twist in the arms race spiral was initiated by the Soviet Union. It is only in response to actions of the other side and out of legitimate concern for our own security and that of our allies and friends, concern for international security as a whole, that we have developed or are developing this or that weapon system.

Moreover, as early as 1946, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed that nuclear weapons should be banned for all time. We have been advocating this ever since, and this remains our position now. We have been proposing and continue to propose that agreement should be reached on renouncing all weapons of mass destruction, reducing and totally eliminating their existing stockpiles, and cutting down armed forces and conventional armaments. Our country has come out with a proposal on general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

These radical proposals have yet to be implemented, and it is the United States and some other NATO countries, rather than the Soviet Union, that are to blame for this fact.

It is precisely because of their refusal to follow the example of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, which has also unilaterally pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, that the threat of nuclear war continues to hang over the world.

None the less, due to the vigorous efforts of the Soviet Union and other peace-loving States a number of treaties and agreements limiting the arms race in major areas have been concluded. These are the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the SALT I Agreement, signed in 1972, and the

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

1979 SALT II treaty. All these treaties, which have served in large measure to reinforce strategic stability, became possible because political realism was also displayed by the then leaders of the United States and other Western countries.

It is not the fault of the Soviet Union that local conflicts break out and are raging in various regions of the world. The only thing that we could be "guilty" of is that we have invariably been and remain on the side of the peoples threatened by imperialism and of the States upon whose sovereignty and generally recognized rights imperialism is encroaching.

As regards the increasingly acute economic problems common to all mankind, the Soviet Union has consistently been in favour of uniting the efforts of all States and peoples with a view to finding a rational solution to those problems. This is the thrust of the proposals made by our country, by all Warsaw Treaty member countries, for a drastic reduction in the military expenditures of States, and above all of the major Powers.

These are all facts, which cannot be disputed.

Responsibility for the current critical state of international relations rests with another group of countries, namely, the United States and some of its closest allies.

It was they who, in the early 1980s, wrecked the structure of negotiations which had taken such an effort to build, negotiations which had shown signs of progress towards agreements in many areas ranging from complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests to the limitation of sales and supplies of conventional armaments, from banning the development of anti-satellite systems to limiting military activities in the Indian Ocean. It was the United States that refused to ratify the SALT II treaty designed to pave the way to further, ever more substantial cuts in strategic arms. It was the United States that in 1983

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

torpedoed the Soviet-United States talks on the limitation of nuclear arms in Europe by embarking on the deployment of its new nuclear missiles on the European continent.

And the new military programmes which now cover not only the land, oceans and atmosphere of our planet but also outer space are United States programmes too.

No particular perspicacity is needed to see clearly that precisely those States that are obstructing disarmament efforts are also set on fomenting local conflicts. They bear responsibility for the failure thus far to come to grips with problems common to all mankind.

All of this is being said not for the sake of polemics but in order that the United Nations may, on the basis of real facts and through concerted efforts, devise effective ways of radically improving international relations and strengthening universal security.

What are these ways as we see them?

It is said at times that all that is needed is that the two super-Powers should stop competing with each other for influence in the world. This proposition stems either from ignorance or from malicious intent. First, the Soviet Union has no intention of placing itself above other States and peoples, nor is it seeking opportunities to order them about or dictate its will to them. Secondly, the Soviet Union is not involved in any competition whatsoever, whether for markets, natural resources, control over sea or air routes, or the possession of outer space.

On the other hand, it is of course true that the Soviet Union is one of the world's two most powerful nations. But the whole point is what political aims are served by that Power. Those who invoke the concept of the "two super-Powers" would be well advised to ponder once in a while what would happen to their independence and what turn world developments would generally take if the USSR were weaker

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

than it is and if the Soviet people were not investing so much of their effort, material resources and scientific endeavour in maintaining its economic and military potential at an adequate level.

In discussions about the ways of improving the situation frequent mention is also made of the need to restore, above all, confidence among States. This, it is said, would make it possible to resolve all major problems, including those of halting the arms race and settling regional conflicts. Indeed, confidence is an important factor in overcoming the current difficulties. We feel, however, that it is impossible to achieve a necessary and reliable degree of trust in relations among States unless the causes and the material roots of distrust are removed.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

But work to restore confidence must be pursued, and that is what we are doing. In particular, at the Stockholm Conference of States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Soviet Union is working for the adoption of a complex of large-scale, effective political, military and technical confidence-building measures. At Stockholm we are now prepared to proceed immediately, together with our negotiating partners, to the actual drafting of agreements to that effect. Our country attaches major importance to the pan-European process as a whole.

The Soviet Union is building and developing its relations with all States in strict compliance with the Final Act and on the basis of the 10 principles proclaimed therein. It attaches special importance to the factor of confidence in those relations, and it is pleased when it sees that this factor is present in its relations with various countries in Europe, America, Asia, Africa or Oceania.

In our relations with other States we have always given priority to the search for ways of easing international tension and averting the danger of war. Of great importance in this context is the forthcoming visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to France.

We also want to build normal, stable relations with the United States. We have never been the initiators of confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. We do not believe that the tensions today in Soviet-American relations result from an inevitable clash of national interests. We therefore believe that both sides have an interest in the successful outcome of the forthcoming meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. This is precisely how the Soviet Union approaches that meeting. It remains to be seen what will be the attitude of the other side in this matter.

We are convinced that the Soviet-American summit meeting should focus on the most important problem of the day, the problem upon whose solution truly depends on the possibility of decisively reducing the danger of war, restoring international

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

trust and creating the conditions necessary for resolving many other pressing issues in relations among States. The problem I am referring to is that of preventing an arms race in outer space and ending the arms race on earth, limiting and reducing nuclear arms and enhancing strategic stability. I will address this question in somewhat greater detail.

To begin with, it would appear indisputable that as long as States possess nuclear weapons the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war cannot be completely ruled out. It is equally true, however, that in conditions of strategic equilibrium, that risk is comparatively lower, for strategic equilibrium means essentially that each side, even if it became a victim of nuclear aggression committed by the other side, would retain sufficient strategic capacity to strike an equally devastating blow to the aggressor. Consequently, in conditions of strategic equilibrium there could be no winner in a nuclear war and starting one would be tantamount to committing suicide.

Yet the situation might change if one side should try to acquire such a nuclear potential as would encourage it to think that by a single strike it could deprive the other side of adequate retaliatory capacity against aggression, particularly if the potential aggressor should develop a space-based anti-missile shield and count on it to protect itself against a retaliatory strike. It is obvious that in such case the aggressor might be tempted to deliver or threaten to deliver a first "disarming" nuclear strike - as it is now known - counting on its immunity to retaliation. Hence the extreme danger inherent in any bid for military superiority in a nuclear age. Yet this is precisely the purpose of the new United States military programmes, work on which has already begun or is about to begin.

It could be argued that this is a purely hypothetical danger since the Soviet Union has repeatedly stated that it would not allow the other side to achieve superiority and would take appropriate counter-measures to restore the balance.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

But would that mean that the problem of the danger of nuclear war would simply disappear?

It is true that our country would not permit military superiority over it. The State and Party leadership of the Soviet Union has instructed me to reaffirm this once again in this United Nations forum. Those who may expect that the Soviet economy would not be able to stand up to the strain of the qualitatively new stage in the arms race which is currently being forced upon us are profoundly mistaken. Our country and the Soviet economy have had to withstand even greater pressures. Today, the economic might of the Soviet State and its scientific and technological potential are such as to leave no doubt whatever in anyone's mind concerning the ability and determination of our people to meet that new challenge.

However, it should not be forgotten that the higher the level of military confrontation in this nuclear and space age, the more shaky and the less secure, even if strategic equilibrium is maintained, become the foundations of world peace. Nuclear war in these conditions could result not only from a deliberate decision but also from attempts at blackmail or from miscalculation by one side as to the intentions or actions of the other. It could also break out as a consequence of someone's reckless behaviour prompted by a sudden aggravation of the situation or because of malfunctions of computers, which are being increasingly relied upon in the operation of modern, sophisticated weapons systems.

Such is our understanding of the current strategic and political realities. It is based on grim facts that cannot be ignored.

It is precisely for this reason that the Soviet Union has been so persistent in seeking not merely the maintenance but a lowering of the existing level of strategic equilibrium and the early adoption of effective measures to stop and reverse the arms race. We know - and many other States now realize this too - that there is no more time to waste, for it may turn out to be too late.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We have gathered in New York in the final days of the first month of autumn. It is a time associated in many countries with the harvest, when farmers look to the coming winter with a feeling of work well done. This thought brings to mind another metaphor which, regrettably, has already taken root in the vocabulary of mankind - the metaphor of the "nuclear winter". We want the word "winter" in all the languages of the world to retain its one and only meaning, its original meaning and to be identified solely with the season of the year which is so beautiful and joyful.

In an attempt to establish a favourable climate for the resumption of the process of arms limitation and reduction, and, ultimately, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere, the Soviet Union has recently taken some substantial steps on a unilateral - I stress "unilateral" - basis. These steps include the decision not to place anti-satellite weapons in outer space so long as the United States does not do so. Unfortunately, however, the United States, disregarding the interests of political and military stability, recently tested an anti-satellite weapon against a target in space. Those steps also include the suspension of further implementation of our counter-measures in Europe consequent upon the deployment of United States medium-range nuclear systems on the territories of some Western European countries. Finally, there is our moratorium on nuclear explosions.

It is clear that by their very nature such unilateral steps could not be taken as measures of unlimited duration; but they could be of unlimited duration if the United States followed our good example. That would constitute significant progress towards a relaxation of military tension in the world. If, however, the United States fails to heed the voice of reason, no one will be able to blame us when the unilateral moratoriums we have declared come to an end as their terms expire. It is not for us but for the United States to make the choice.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Notwithstanding the importance of such steps as moratoriums designed to curb the arms race, the peoples of the world have every right to demand that radical measures be taken to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear - and not only nuclear - weapons.

From the very beginning of the Geneva negotiations on nuclear and space weapons our country has been determined to achieve a radical solution to these interrelated problems and has taken a constructive position. The Soviet delegation had brought to the current round of negotiations substantial, large-scale and far-reaching proposals. We believe that agreement to ban space-strike weapons and to bring about truly radical reductions in nuclear arms would today have the most positive effect. Such an agreement could bring about a turn for the better in the entire course of world events, avert the threat of nuclear catastrophe and open up for the peoples of the world the prospect of a world free from fear for tomorrow. Mankind would be moving towards the new millenium which is already almost with us, confident that civilization would continue to advance.

The Soviet Union has put forward proposals on the whole range of issues relating to the cessation of the arms race. I am not going to mention each of those proposals for all of them will, in one way or another, become the subject of an exchange of views at the General Assembly. Let me just say that they cover the nuclear field, including the cessation of nuclear tests, as well as chemical weapons, conventional weapons and the numerical strength of armed forces. In some cases it is a question of a freeze; in others of a reduction. The Soviet Union continues resolutely continues to support proposals to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, chemical-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world. It favours a limitation of naval activities and naval armaments and resolutely opposes the development of any new weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In the context of the proposed arms limitation and reduction measures, the Soviet Union believes it necessary to provide for adequate measures of verification and control, in some cases national, and in others national combined with international, whenever there is an objective necessity for this. We have as great an interest as anyone in effective verification of compliance by all States with their obligations in connection with disarmament measures. We call upon the States represented in the United Nations General Assembly, both members of politico-military alliances and non-aligned and neutral countries, to support this approach, which we are convinced is constructive and at the same time realistic.

I would now like to offer some ideas as to what might be done to eliminate, through our collective efforts, local wars and conflicts, which result in untold suffering and innumerable casualties.

Viewed in a purely United Nations context, the solution to this problem may seem simple. All that is needed is to compel all States to comply fully and scrupulously in their actions with their commitments under the United Nations Charter and equally firmly to deny support to those who violate those commitments.

For instance, it is hard to imagine that any delegation would venture to assert here that the monstrous crimes of the Israeli aggressors on the ravaged soil of Lebanon and in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are consistent with the principles of the United Nations Charter or that the financing, arming, training and infiltrating into Nicaragua of thousands upon thousands of counter-revolutionaries - contras, as they are called - are consistent with those principles.

Only chauvinistic arrogance could lead anyone to deny the Palestinian people their right to independent statehood while recognizing that right for the people of Israel. All peoples and nations have equal rights.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Who is unaware of the brutal record of the South African apartheid régime, which is executing hundreds of the country's indigenous inhabitants and jailing thousands of others? Who is unaware of the acts of aggression it is constantly committing against Angola - as we see today - as well as against Mozambique, Botswana and Lesotho? It would indeed be blasphemous even to think that this inhuman régime acts in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. But it is a fact that the Pretoria racists receive support, and that this support comes from a major Power that 40 years ago was among the founding Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Of course, expressing indignation at the crimes of the racists and condemning the aggressor does not in itself mean that those crimes will be eliminated. The peaceful settlement of any given conflict with full and just regard for the legitimate interests of all sides requires a political basis for a settlement which would not be prejudicial to those interests, as well as a negotiating mechanism appropriate to each specific conflict situation.

Such political platforms for the just settlement of all or nearly all existing regional conflicts have already been or are being formulated. Suitable negotiating mechanisms either already exist or can be established.

Let us now turn to the situation in the Middle East. The main parameters for solving the Middle East problem in a manner that would take into account the legitimate interests of all parties have long ago been defined. They include the return to the Arab States of all their territories occupied by Israel since 1967, the exercise of the right of the Arab people of Palestine to establish an independent State of their own and ensuring the right of all States in the Middle East, including Israel, to live in peace and security. A negotiating mechanism for such a settlement has long ago been proposed as well, namely, an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and a number of other countries, including the Soviet Union and the United States.

There may, however, be some people who think that the Middle East knot can be untied by separate deals, but experience has already shown that such actions can only result in aggravating the conflict instead of settling it. We believe that this year the General Assembly will take an even firmer stand in favour of an early and just political settlement in the Middle East, and will demand that those who continue to resist such a settlement should stop their sabotage.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

I should like to recall, in this connection, that Israel owes its very existence to a decision of this Organization, a decision which also called for the establishment in Palestine of an Arab State. It was a dual decision. The Soviet Union actively supported precisely that decision and, incidentally, it was among the first to recognize the State of Israel.

In principle, a negotiating mechanism also exists for settling the situation in Central America which was indeed conceived by the Latin American countries themselves. I am referring to the Contadora group, with which several more South American States, recently expressed solidarity. There is also a draft act of peace in Central America drawn up by the Contadora members. It is widely supported by the States and peoples of the region, including the Government and the people of Nicaragua, the country which is the target of the spearhead of imperialist aggression. It is important for the United Nations to support the efforts of the Contadora group and contribute to overcoming the resistance of those who, instead of peace, seek to restore their domination in Central America.

It is also possible to break the deadlock in the Cyprus problem provided that an end is put to interference by imperialist forces and that the recognition of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus is laid down as a firm basis.

I should like to make some specific comments about Afghanistan. A political settlement of the situation that has arisen around that country is also possible. What is necessary for this is that everyone should recognize the right of the Afghan people to build their life as they wish and that armed and other forms of outside interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan should be ended. When such interference is ended, and if there is a guarantee that it will not be resumed, it will then become possible to withdraw from Afghanistan, by agreement with the Afghan Government, the Soviet military

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

contingent. The sooner a political settlement is achieved, the better it will be for everyone.

The proposals of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea provide a good political framework for building good-neighbourly relations between all the States of South-East Asia, particularly between the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the States of Indo-China. The basis for such relations is gradually taking shape and the countries concerned are perfectly capable of establishing a negotiating mechanism. What is important is that no one should stand in the way of their wish to reach agreement with each other.

We support the efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea designed to bring about the peaceful reunification of Korea and the demand for the withdrawal from South Korea of all foreign troops as well as the proposal to make the Korean peninsula a nuclear-free zone.

The question of the situation in southern Africa is an urgent one today. What needs to be done here is for the Security Council finally and fully to exercise its authority with regard to the racist South African régime, which, in violation of the United Nations decisions on the subject, refuses to transfer power to the Namibian people and poses a threat to the security of African States and global security.

A quarter of a century has gone by since the United Nations adopted, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, a decision which has contributed substantially to changing the face of the world today, namely, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The work that was started then has now been almost completed - almost, but not entirely. There should be no room on our planet for the remaining fragments and hotbeds of colonialism. In this matter, too, the United Nations should speak out unequivocally and definitively. It is

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

important that the newly free countries and peoples should be given assistance in ensuring their genuine political and economic independence.

The United Nations quite rightly can and must raise its voice against the exploitation of developing countries by imperialist monopolies, against the plundering of their natural resources and the strangling of their economies with the noose of indebtedness. Cuba and some other States Members of the United Nations have proposed ways of solving the problem of financial indebtedness.

We support the demands of the newly free States for the establishment of a new international economic order on a just and democratic basis in accordance with earlier decisions of the United Nations and we also support their opposition to what is known as cultural and information neo-colonialism and all other forms of neo-colonialism.

It is inadmissible that the States of Asia, Africa and Latin America should be regarded as a sphere of someone's "vital" interests, as an arena for confrontation with socialism. Those States form the influential Non-Aligned Movement and actively support disarmament, détente and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, which has once again been convincingly demonstrated at the recent Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Luanda.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The rights and freedoms of the individual are inextricably linked with the rights of peoples. The unique experience of our country eloquently testifies to this. Socialism has not only ensured that each and every citizen enjoys equal rights to work, housing, rest and pensions, has not only made it possible to obtain all kinds of education and medical services free of charge, but has also provided comprehensive guarantees of those rights. The standards of social justice were established in close co-ordination with the realization of the principles of self-determination of all nations and nationalities, including the preservation of their identity and the development of such national phenomena as language, literacy, literature and the arts.

Thanks to the advantages of the socialist system, the peoples of the Soviet Union, oppressed in the past, backward and divided, now stand together, united and therefore strong, and have over a historically short span of time reached the most advanced frontiers of economic development and created a flourishing spiritual culture and attained the heights of human civilization.

We believe that this is the path that not only leads to economic and spiritual prosperity but also contributes to the building of trust between peoples and, on this basis, to bringing them closer together and concerting their efforts in order to attain the goals common to all mankind. That is how we understand the essence of the question of the rights and freedoms of the individual and peoples.

The United Nations, by virtue of its Charter, must play an important role in encouraging and developing respect for human rights throughout the world. This provision, which laid the groundwork for international co-operation in the field of human rights, was included in the United Nations Charter on the initiative of the Soviet Union. Forty years have gone by since that time but, regrettably, to this very day flagrant, massive violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms are

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

taking place. This is an inherent characteristic of a society where the power and wealth of a minority exist at the expense of the majority of the population. Such violations have become a norm of life in those States whose leaders are trying so hard to depict themselves as champions of human rights.

I should like once again to draw members' attention to a problem, the solution to which will largely shape the world of our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I am referring to the problem of the peaceful exploration of outer space.

Until only recently, space was the realm of science fiction, but it has now become a theatre of man's practical activities. The peaceful exploration of space holds out for mankind truly limitless prospects of utilizing scientific and technological achievements to promote the economic and social progress of the peoples of the world and to solve the tremendous problems facing mankind on Earth.

However, these truly cosmic dimensions - and here I am not speaking figuratively but literally - also present new requirements to the inhabitants of the Earth and above all to the leaders of States.

There should be no repetition of the mistake made four decades ago when States and the peoples of the world were unable to prevent the great intellectual achievement of the mid-twentieth century - the release of the energy of the atomic nucleus - from becoming a means of mass annihilation of human beings. This is a folly which should not be allowed to recur at the end of this century when mankind, having filled the first pages of its space history, is facing a choice: space will either help to improve the living conditions on our planet or it will become the source of a new and deadly danger.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In wishing to contribute to man's progress towards new heights of civilization, our country has taken a new major initiative by proposing the inclusion in the agenda of this session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space in conditions of its non-militarization".

At the same time, the Soviet Union has submitted to the General Assembly specific proposals regarding the main directions, areas and principles of broad international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Outer space is indivisible and all States should be able to take part in its peaceful exploration.

This means that progress should be made by joint efforts in both basic and applied areas of space exploration, so that all peoples can benefit from space research. It is our view that such co-operation could best be carried out within the framework of a world space organization. And this could become a reality provided that all channels for the militarizing of the boundless regions of outer space are blocked off.

To counter the sinister plans of "star wars", the Soviet Union is placing before the international community the concept of "star peace".

The Soviet Union hopes that its proposals will be carefully examined by the General Assembly.

The Soviet delegation has set forth the views and proposals of the Soviet Union which we have found it necessary and timely to submit for the consideration of the United Nations. It is our hope that they will be regarded with understanding by all States represented in this Hall and by all the peoples which make up a united mankind.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Much useful work for the benefit of peace and international co-operation has been done by the United Nations over the past 40 years. However, the United Nations has still a great deal more to do since it appears that we are now entering upon a most crucial period in the history of mankind, when it will have to take a decision on this question of paramount importance: whether to live in peace or perish in nuclear war.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In this regard, I should like to quote the following policy statement by Mikhail S. Gorbachev:

"Our goal as we see it is to resolve together - for no one is able to do it alone - the major problems which are essentially common to us all: how to prevent war, how to end the arms race and embark on disarmament, how to settle existing conflicts and crises and prevent potential ones, how to create a world climate that would allow every country to focus attention and concentrate resources on finding solutions to its own problems - show me a country that has no problems - and how to join efforts in resolving global problems."

Mr. FOOS (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): Luxembourg has assumed the presidency of the Council of the European Community during the second half of this year. It is thus on behalf of the Community and its 10 member States that I have the privilege to speak today. This will be the last statement in the general debate to be made by a president of the Council of Ministers on behalf of the Ten, Spain and Portugal having now signed and ratified the treaties that will in a few months make them full members of our great European family.

I should like to take this opportunity, Sir, to convey to you our heartiest congratulations on your election as President of the fortieth session of the General Assembly. Your considerable experience of international life and your long and remarkable career assure that our work in this anniversary year will be guided with skill, impartiality and authority.

I also wish warmly to thank the President of the thirty-ninth session for his having very effectively guided our discussions during the past 12 months.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude the Secretary-General, who has spared no effort in his tireless work in the cause of peace. Reaffirming our full

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

confidence in him, I should like to urge him to continue in his numerous initiatives of mediation and conciliation.

Before dealing with the political and economic problems facing our Organization at this time, I should like to express to our Mexican colleagues our feelings of profound compassion in connection with the terrible catastrophe that has just created innumerable victims and caused widespread damage in the United Mexican States. Emergency assistance was immediately decided by the European Community and the Ten will do their utmost to bring relief to the Mexican people.

The United Nations and the European Community were created at an interval of a few years. They came into existence following a conflict that shook the entire world and, particularly, Europe. The lofty ambitions of our Organization - to establish and maintain a climate of peace by reducing and overcoming divisions and tensions, some of them century-old - inspired the European Community.

Ten different nations, often bearing the heavy burden of a legacy marked by antagonisms and bloody conflicts, finally succeeded not only in living in peace, but in building a future together. This path of lasting and fruitful reconciliation was possible primarily because of our confidence in the principles of the United Nations Charter and thanks to a concept of the value and dignity of the human person.

On the strength of their experience, the Ten are convinced that universal and effective respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments constitutes the best guarantee for justice and peace. They are convinced that civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, are indivisible and intertwined and form an integral part of a global system of protection for the human person. These ambitions and aspirations, which are the

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

main driving force of our Community of Ten, soon to be twelve, make us ready to listen to all those who suffer and to show our willingness to help seek solutions wherever human rights are threatened. The Ten are determined to promote the economic and social development of peoples and to protect and promote human rights everywhere in the world.*

In the light of these aspirations the picture of the world situation I shall be drawing is hardly encouraging.

Recent developments in East-West relations, and particularly the decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to resume and pursue negotiations in Geneva with a view to preparing agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and ending the arms race on earth, limiting and reducing nuclear weapons and strengthening strategic stability, are a source of satisfaction for the Ten. They welcome the resumption of a dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union. This renewed dialogue gives ground for hopes of a more positive phase in East-West relations.

The Ten will continue to support these negotiations. They are aware that these will demand realism, flexibility and patience. Full respect for commitments entered into will certainly contribute to such a development.

The Ten hope that the new Soviet leaders will give concrete expression to a real desire to establish constructive relations between East and West.

The Ten regret the persistence of obstacles to genuine détente. The occupation of Afghanistan constitutes a particularly flagrant example of such obstacles. I shall return to this later.

They note with regret that human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be the subject of grave and repeated violations in many Eastern European States

*Mr. Gutierrez (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

despite the principles of the United Nations and the commitments solemnly undertaken in the Helsinki Final Act which were confirmed in Madrid. They remain preoccupied by the situation in Poland because of the resumption of political repression and particularly the increase in the number of detainees.

They deplore on the other hand the difficulties created elsewhere for minorities by attempts at forced political assimilation and the denial, purely and simply, of their existence.

They are, however, prepared to pursue their efforts to bring about a climate of mutual confidence and understanding between East and West. They hope to see an improvement in relations with the Warsaw Pact countries in so far as the policies pursued by those countries permits.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe presents an appropriate forum to tackle matters of common interest with these countries, as well as with all other participating countries. Two months ago, all the States participating in that Conference commemorated in Helsinki the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference. That was for us an opportunity to assess the results obtained so far and to look to the future to consider a number of still unresolved issues. The Ten emphasized the importance they attached to respect of all the principles of the Final Act and to the faithful implementation of its provisions. The recent meeting of human rights experts in Ottawa highlighted the gap that continues to exist between commitments freely entered into by participating States and concrete results at the individual level.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

They hope that two meetings scheduled to take place soon - the Budapest Forum on cultural exchanges and the Bern meeting on contacts between individuals and the reuniting of families - will make possible progress in the implementation of the commitments made at Helsinki and Madrid.

At the Stockholm Conference, an integral part of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Ten will continue their efforts to achieve concrete security - and confidence-building measures, in keeping with the mandate. The Ten appeal again for the dialogue begun within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to be strengthened and followed up by concrete and tangible results benefiting the peoples of all the participating countries.

The situation in Cyprus remains an important source of international concern. The Ten again express their support for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus, in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They remind the Assembly that they rejected the statement of 15 November 1983 aimed at the establishment of a separate State in Cyprus. They reaffirm their statement of 10 June last reflecting their refusal to recognize the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and all so-called constitutional developments in that part of the island. The Ten attach particular importance to the good-offices mission entrusted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and call on all interested parties to support his efforts to bring about a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem, and to avoid any action that could undermine the dialogue.

The Ten stress the importance of dialogue and co-operation because we believe that without them misunderstandings are created, tension is increased and the international political climate deteriorates. Indeed, it is that very conviction that is at the basis of the United Nations.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Some degree of openness and transparency is indispensable to the achievement of verifiable agreements on the limitation and reduction of armaments. The Ten believe that if greater attention were paid to that essential point a major condition would be met for the achievement of progress in the framework of various bilateral and multilateral discussions on disarmament, now under way.

Of course, there are still difficult problems to be solved before effective agreements on the limitation and reduction of armaments can be achieved. The Ten stress that negotiations are needed for the achievement of concrete results, in the form of substantial, balanced and verifiable agreements and that these agreements must be implemented. In the opinion of the Ten, such agreements are and will continue to be a major, indeed indispensable, instrument for international peace and security.

Africa is confronting the world with a fundamental challenge: the right to exist and to exist in dignity are at stake there. In several parts of Africa, crises and tensions have led to violence and infringements of human dignity. To that must be added the extreme poverty created by food shortages, and particularly the famine in several regions of the continent. Quite obviously, such serious problems cannot be solved merely by economic measures; political solutions are also required.

In South Africa, the vast majority of South Africans are still denied the right to a dignified existence and to the exercise of the most elementary human rights. The continued tragic adherence of a part of the white population to the immoral system of apartheid causes a continued deterioration of the situation, which each day leads to more violence and injustice and takes an increasing toll of victims. The Pretoria Government must without delay engage in a policy that will lead rapidly to the abolition of the system of apartheid.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

The Ten would remind the Assembly that their objective is the elimination of apartheid, pure and simple, and not just the elimination of some of its elements. They condemn the use of violence from whatever quarter. They reject the policy of bantustanization. It is imperative that all the citizens of South Africa enjoy equal rights; the minorities must be protected. The most recent expressions of intention by the Pretoria Government must now take form in concrete measures. Such measures must, above all, be convincing to the black population. The Ten regard as indispensable a greater determination to bring about reform and stronger indications of a desire for conciliation. The opening of a dialogue with the representatives of the black population is necessary. In order to improve the chances for such dialogue, measures should be taken to establish a climate of confidence; among such measures are those formulated by the Ten - that is, inter alia, the end of the state of emergency, the release of detainees and political prisoners, including Mr. Mandela, and the elimination of discriminatory legislation.

This summer, and particularly on 22 and 31 July, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten, as well as Spain and Portugal, spelled out their position within the present context. They decided to send a European ministerial mission to South Africa. That mission was in South Africa between 30 August and 1 September. In addition to contacts with the governmental authorities, other contacts took place, especially with representatives of the official and unofficial opposition. On that basis, the Ten decided on 10 September to keep up their pressure, and they harmonized their positions on a number of measures to be taken with regard to South Africa. The question of other measures, including sanctions, remains on the agenda. The Ten reserve their right to reconsider their position if there is not significant progress within a reasonable period.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

The Government of South Africa cannot avoid the imperative need to abolish apartheid without delay. Some white inhabitants quite wrongly believe that they can refuse to face the facts. But they cannot escape them. Their responsibility is enormous, and nothing authorizes them to allow their country and its people to be engulfed in chaos.

The Ten are rightly concerned over the persistence of conflict situations and of serious threats to the sovereignty and development of the other States of southern Africa. In Namibia, it remains necessary to implement, without pre-conditions and without delay, Security Council resolution 435 (1978) - still the only acceptable basis for a final settlement. South Africa's illegal occupation must cease, and the Namibian people must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination as soon as possible. The Ten regard the interim Government established by South Africa as null and void. They reaffirm their support for the front-line States and the Namibian people in the political and economic spheres.

The Ten express their full support for Security Council resolution 571 (1985), which demands that South Africa immediately withdraw from Angola and abstain from all acts of aggression against the neighbouring countries.

Finally, the situation in the Horn of Africa is characterized by persistent tensions, for which negotiated political solutions must be urgently sought, on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and decisions by the Organization of African Unity.

Drought and desertification, particularly in the Sudano-Sahelian region and in the Horn of Africa, have caused death, epidemic, exodus, destruction of traditional structures and delay in the development of all too many States. The assistance to be rendered by the Community, particularly in the framework of the Lomé III

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Convention, and its member States to the Africans will remain an important priority. I shall revert to this problem in the part of this statement dealing with economic matters. Over and above a rescue policy, the prevention and warning systems must be strengthened urgently, in order to confront food crises more effectively and to alleviate the phenomenon of refugees, affecting 5 million persons in Africa.

The Organization of African Unity is aware of the urgency of this approach, and the Ten support the efforts of that organization and its members to bring peace and prosperity to Africans despite the difficulties faced by the States of the continent, difficulties often caused or accentuated by natural disasters.

In the Middle East, a region seriously affected by mistrust and violence, there is still no peace or security. The sacrifices imposed there for so long now have led to despair, bitterness and hatred. An extraordinary effort is required to accept the enemy as a neighbour. None the less, the enemies of today must cease regarding each other as such.

(Mr. POOS, Luxembourg)

Within the context of the Israel-Arab conflict, there is a ray of hope. Without haste or hesitation, the hearts and a sense of reason can bring about peace. The Ten consider that the peace efforts embarked upon, particularly with the agreement between Jordan and Palestine concluded on 11 February last, which contains a commitment to start negotiations in keeping with United Nations resolutions including those of the Security Council, are a positive development. The Ten believe that any movement in favour of a peaceful settlement of the conflict should be encouraged. It is necessary to encourage the movement which has begun and to facilitate a dialogue between all the parties to the conflict.

While a lasting solution should attract the participation of all the parties concerned, a real willingness to expand and support the movement toward peace should be expected from the region as a whole.

If the proposed peace initiatives do not find fertile ground, the problems in the area will only worsen. The parties directly concerned must recognize this fact and recognize each other. Denial of the opponent's existence is an act of blindness and is an admission of a lack of strong desire for peace. Recognition by the parties of their mutual existence and rights is a matter of priority.

The Ten wish to make a contribution to an overall settlement. We believe that an overall settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), including the right to existence and to security of all the States in the area, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples in the area and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, with all its implications.

Association of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) with the negotiation process is necessary. The principle of the non-use of force and the non-acquisition of territory by the use of force must be respected, and the territorial occupation by Israel since 1967 must come to an end. The Ten would

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

remind the Assembly that measures taken by Israel in the territories that it has occupied since 1967, which are aimed at altering the legal, geographical and demographic structure of the territory, are contrary to international law.

The commitment of the United Nations has often taken the form of a useful contribution to the problems of the Middle East. The United Nations must be encouraged to persist in its work. This is true of the search for peace in the Israel-Arab conflict and in Lebanon, and in the Gulf crisis.

Confrontations in Lebanon have still not come to an end. Acts of violence and terrorism from which the civilian population of Lebanon and innocent foreign nationals, including citizens of the Community have suffered have recently increased in number. The Ten are very seriously concerned by this state of affairs and we would call on all the parties concerned to endeavour to begin a dialogue between the various Lebanese communities.

In this context, they welcomed the efforts by President Gemayel to promote a policy of national reconciliation in the interest of safeguarding the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon, with the assistance of all the parties concerned. The Ten reiterate the need for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, as well as of all the armed elements that are not there at the request of the Lebanese Government. The Ten urge that the observers be allowed to fully play their role, and we remind the Assembly of the importance that we ascribe to the full implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We would call on all the parties to co-operate fully with these United Nations contingents.

The conflict between Iran and Iraq has now gone into its fifth year. The escalation of military actions against the populations and civilian targets, and

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

the serious consequences of this for regional stability, as well as for the economy of both countries, have become intolerable.

The Ten would make a further appeal to Iran and Iraq for an immediate cease-fire and to enter without delay into negotiations in order to seek, in keeping with United Nations decisions, an honourable and acceptable settlement for both parties. We would support any mediation, including the efforts of the Secretary-General, and we would invite both countries to respect the commitment entered into in June 1984 to avoid the bombing of civilian targets. The Ten would draw the attention of both parties to the serious concern aroused on a humanitarian level, in particular by the treatment of prisoners of war. We condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere and at any time, and we stress the need to respect the Geneva conventions and other rules of international law, including those regarding the security of civil aviation and shipping.

In Asia, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has now gone on for nearly six years. The Soviet Union seems to be insensitive to the constant appeals of the international community to withdraw its troops, and it continues its offensive policies in this traditionally neutral and non-aligned country, flouting thereby the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Ten would repeat once again their appeal to the Soviet Union to put an end to its military presence in that country, in keeping with the principles of non-interference and to promote the self-determination of the Afghan people as set forth in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The intensification of fighting by the Soviet forces and persistent violations of human rights have merely increased the sufferings of the Afghan people.

Sorely tested by the growing influx of Afghan refugees, Pakistan has been the victim of numerous attacks from Afghanistan against its territory. The Ten condemn

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

these violations of the Pakistani borders, which will not contribute to a political settlement. Such actions and the shifting of confrontations along the border zone of Pakistan seriously run the risk of extending the conflict.

Considering the gravity of the situation, the Ten would remind the Assembly that a negotiated political solution is necessary to resolve the Afghan conflict in a just and lasting manner. We therefore support the good offices of the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, from which we expect speedy and real progress. In particular we hope for an agreement on a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, which remains a key element in the solution.

On the Indochinese peninsula, Cambodia is still the target of attacks by Viet Nam, which continues to threaten peace and stability in South-East Asia. The persistent violations of its territorial integrity, of its national identity, are part of a policy of fait accompli, an intolerable principle. Repeated violations of the sovereignty of Thailand have also been strongly condemned by the international community. The unprecedented dimensions of humanitarian problems in that region today require, more than ever before, a peaceful, speedy, lasting and comprehensive settlement.

The Ten support any initiative aimed at beginning constructive negotiations among the parties concerned, on the basis of the principles agreed to by the international conference on Cambodia. In this connection we deplore the fact that Viet Nam continues to be intransigent and refuses to abide by the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly by vast majorities.

Aside from these two focal points of crisis, the stability of the Asian continent is continually being threatened by the division of the Korean peninsula. In this connection, the Ten observed with satisfaction a few faint signs, which

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

have emerged recently, regarding the resumed contacts between North and South, and in particular the exchange of family visits. A widespread inter-Korean dialogue can alone eventually lead to a peaceful reunification of Korea, which the whole population desires in order to be represented in the United Nations.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

From this rostrum a year ago the Ten expressed the hope that the process of democratization which had already begun in Latin America would continue and spread. Today, with a few exceptions, such as Chile, Paraguay and Suriname, the nations of South America have democratic, pluralistic régimes. The Ten are very satisfied at this development. We are aware of the difficult tasks now facing these countries in consolidating their democratic institutions and dealing with the serious economic and social problems that confront them. The Ten stress their willingness to assist those countries as much as they can in their efforts to bring about economic stability and social justice in the interest of maintaining peace and democracy in that region.

The Ten are pleased that a broad range of trends of opinion in Chile have converged in national agreement on the transition to democracy. We appeal again to the Chilean authorities to respect human rights and to cease to impede the re-establishment of democracy in keeping with the aspirations of the Chilean people.

The Ten remain convinced that the conflicts in Central America cannot be resolved by the use of force but only through a peaceful negotiated settlement originating in the region itself and based on the principles of independence, non-interference and the inviolability of borders. The initiative of the Contadora Group, which the Ten have supported from the outset, offers the best path towards such a settlement. We welcome the support now being given to the Contadora Group by four democratic countries of South America. We would the countries concerned to agree speedily, on the basis of the Contadora proposals, on a comprehensive, lasting settlement. To ensure mutual trust, the implementation of such a peace agreement must be accompanied by suitable verification and control measures.

The Ten believe that it is important for all the countries concerned to contribute actively to a reduction of tension in the area in order to facilitate

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

the Contadora process. Similarly, we call on the countries of Central America to commit themselves to developing democratic systems and guaranteeing full respect for human rights in keeping with the Contadora document which they have signed.

The San Jose conference on 28 and 29 September 1984 brought to the capital of Costa Rica the Ten, Spain, Portugal and the Commission of the European Communities, as well as the countries of Central America and of the Contadora Group. Since that conference the Ten have continued their efforts to strengthen their relations with the countries of the region. We hope that the signing of the agreement on co-operation and the institutionalization of the political dialogue between the countries of the European Community and those of Central America which is to take place at the ministerial meeting on 11 and 12 November in Luxembourg, will contribute to the economic and social development of those countries and to a peaceful settlement arising from the region itself.

During this anniversary year there will be further opportunities for us to reflect on the achievements of the past and, above all, the future objectives of our Organization four decades after its creation. Of course, the United Nations system has not been able to fulfil all the immense initial hopes of its founders. But, in a world where hatred, contempt and intolerance continue to rage, the Charter, which should be our creed, remains a point of reference, a standard of measurement for all our actions. After so many years during which our membership has constantly increased, we must, of course, be flexible about how to ensure that the Organization works properly.

There is one particular area in which the Ten have always considered it very important that the United Nations play an active role: the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We wish to reaffirm once more that it is the duty of the United Nations to ensure full respect for the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to react promptly

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

and appropriately to violations of human rights wherever they may occur. In this connection, the Ten sincerely hope that a post of high commissioner for human rights will be established so that the actions of the incumbent can reinforce our Organization's procedures.

The work of the United Nations can be carried out properly only if the fundamental principle of universality as set out in Article 4 of the Charter is fully respected wherever in the United Nations system the question arises. Respect for the rights of all, in keeping with the provisions of the Charter, should be the guarantee that universality, which is the only principle can enable the Charter to serve the universal conscience.

World economic conditions are better today than they have been for many years, although the prospects for growth remain uncertain. Economic recovery, while still inadequate, can be seen in several industrialized countries which have succeeded in improving the prospects of growth, thanks in particular to their efforts at structural adjustment and improvement of their economies. Inflation has been substantially reduced, and investments have increased in many countries.

World trade has increased appreciably, although the results of the struggle against protectionism have thus far been inadequate and uneven. The recovery has begun to spread from the developed world to the developing world. The adjustment programmes of the developing countries are beginning to bear fruit and so far it has been possible to solve the most pressing difficulties of the indebted developing countries. The most urgent problems arising from the famine in Africa are beginning to be solved.

Nevertheless, many problems remain. In Europe particularly unemployment continues to be high and is a subject of major concern. The recovery is still inadequate in many developed countries. The international financial and monetary situation remains uncertain. Protectionist tension persists. Many developing

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

countries are still in the grip of grave internal and external problems. Finally, the spectre of famine continues to stalk many countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Therefore, despite the undeniable progress made so far, new joint efforts at the national and international levels are needed. The domestic policies adopted so far to improve the performance of our economies must be continued, but it will not be possible to restore healthy, lasting growth and ensure a return to the development process unless each of us remains aware of both the domestic and the external effects of our policies. Special stress was laid on this point at the recent economic summit in Bonn.

If the world economy is to function more harmoniously international economic co-operation must be increased. North-South relations play a major role in this connection, and we believe that they must be improved.

For its part, the European Community remains committed to an approach to North-South problems that takes account of the interdependence of our economies and the interrelationship between the various problems under discussion in our several forums. It also recognizes the need for of a more concrete, specific approach and believes that we should explore every possibility of dialogue and international co-operation in the regions or sectors with the most urgent problems. The dialogue it is continuing in the framework of the Lomé Convention is a concrete example of that approach.

The Community also stresses the need to strengthen multilateral financial development institutions, which play an irreplaceable role. Finally, it considers that the conditions of the North-South dialogue can be improved, and it endorses what has been said on the subject, in particular within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

Among the most urgent and serious problems facing us, I would mention first of all the problem of hunger in Africa. This is a scourge which imperils the very survival of tens of millions of human beings and calls for the mobilization of the efforts of the whole international community.

A certain number of international initiatives have already been taken. Among them I would particularly stress the United Nations Conference on the Emergency Situation in Africa, which met last March in Geneva, following upon the Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. That Conference, the convening of which was particularly welcomed to us, has undoubtedly made it possible to make the world more aware of the plight of the victims of drought and famine and helped to facilitate the mobilization of resources to aid those people. Within this context stress was placed quite rightly on the essential role of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa in regard to the co-ordination of bilateral and multilateral assistance.

The European Community and its member States have for their part very rapidly taken a series of measures to deal with the problem of hunger in Africa. Thus, by providing food aid totalling approximately 2.3 million tons of cereals or the equivalent in 1984-1985, they have fully honoured their commitments. It might be thought that, thanks to these various measures and the commitments undertaken by various countries, the essential food requirements of the 20 African countries hardest hit by famine would be covered in the next few months, provided we can overcome the vast problems of delivering the international aid to the people concerned. However, no matter how necessary it may be to meet the urgent needs, food aid, in our opinion, involves certain dangers and cannot constitute a lasting solution.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

In addition to the emergency assistance, effective policies for long-term development must be put into effect. This point has been stressed by our Heads of State or Government, who only recently recalled the need to establish a global co-ordinated strategy against drought, to support the efforts of the African countries in regard to food security and to give priority to the struggle against desertification.

The European Community, in this context, is pleased with the decision to establish a special fund for Africa within the framework of the World Bank. It hopes that these operations will make it possible to undertake the necessary structural reforms for reviving the economies of the recipient countries. Furthermore, we very much hope that the current replenishment of the resources of the International Fund for Agricultural Development will continue.

The problem of the indebtedness of many developing countries also continues to be a matter of serious concern to us. The burden of debt-servicing often has attained overwhelming proportions and jeopardizes the prospects for development as well as the political and social stability of the countries concerned. This situation continues to pose a serious threat to the whole international monetary and financial system.

Significant progress has, however, been made in this field, and a start has been made in solving the most urgent problems, thanks to an improvement in the world economic situation and to the remarkable and courageous efforts of adjustment undertaken by the debtor countries and the flexibility and rapidity of the interventions of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the creditors' clubs and the banking system. Nevertheless, the underlying problems remain, and we must all make the necessary efforts to avoid a serious financial crisis.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

The European Community believes that differential treatment of differing situations of indebtedness within the existing institutional framework is as useful as ever. However, we also feel it is necessary, in the search for lasting solutions, to consider the problem of indebtedness from a standpoint that goes beyond the short term and to examine the matter in all its aspects: the lowering of world interest rates, an adequate transfer of resources, the consolidation of the world economic recovery and sustained growth in international trade are all factors which could serve to ease the constraints on the debtor developing countries. It is equally essential for these countries to pursue policies that would make possible the long-term structural adjustment of their economies.

I have already several times stressed the importance that the European Community attaches to the growth of international trade as a contribution to world economic recovery and the giving of new momentum to the process of development. A multilateral system of open trade is essential for general prosperity. Therefore it is the business of all of us. It is important for all of us to continue the implementation of the work programme of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and to honour the international commitments undertaken in the struggle against protectionism. The European Community supports the launching as soon as possible of a new series of multilateral trade negotiations within the framework of GATT which would deal with a balanced array of subjects and allow the interests of all the countries concerned, developed or developing, to be met.

However, trade negotiations alone will not solve all the problems. We feel that solutions to the problem of imbalance deriving from monetary and financial fields cannot be found in trade negotiations. Determined and concerted action is necessary to improve the functioning of the international monetary system. We also need an increase in the flow of resources to the developing countries. Results in

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

the monetary and financial fields should be sought hand in hand with results in the trade field. In this regard we note with satisfaction the positive approach demonstrated by the participants in the Bonn summit meeting, both with regard to improvement of the functioning of the international monetary system and with regard to the necessity for an adequate transfer of resources especially for the benefit of the poorest countries. We hope that the forthcoming discussions within the International Monetary Fund in particular will make it possible to embark on fruitful dialogue.

I turn now to more specific problems of the least developed countries. In the next few days there will be held in Geneva a mid-term review of the implementation of the New Substantial Programme of Action for the least developed countries adopted at the Paris Conference in September 1981. We hope that this important meeting will undertake an objective stock-taking of the implementation of that new programme of action and will come to agreement on measures to improve implementation.

The European Community and its member States have made definite efforts with regard to the implementation of the New Substantial Programme of Action. I would recall in particular what I have already said on the struggle against hunger afflicting some of the African least developed countries. With regard to official development assistance, I note that some of us have greatly exceeded the target of 0.15 per cent for the benefit of the least developed countries as contained in the New Substantial Programme of Action. Other member States have come very close to that. I would also recall that of the 36 least developed countries 27 are developing countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific which last December signed the Third Lomé Convention. This new Convention, which testifies to the will to strengthen and broaden the links between the European Community and 66 developing countries, will make it possible for a large number of the poorest of

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

the developing countries to benefit from provisions which, while keeping intact the previous Conventions, contain a certain number of innovations. In this regard I should like to stress that the new Convention establishes a new process based on genuine co-operation between the donor country and the recipient country. Constant dialogue will make it possible to improve the effectiveness of community aid. Furthermore, I would recall that the new Convention provides for an increased volume of financial resources for the development of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

In conclusion, I wish to say a few words about the transformation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) into a specialized agency of the United Nations. This is an important event in the history of international economic co-operation. We expect a great deal from this new organization. We are sure that the new UNIDO will benefit from the experience of other specialized agencies and will produce a programme and working methods which will enable it to carry out successfully its mission of technical assistance in the field of industrial co-operation, particularly for the benefit of the poorest countries.

(Mr. Poos, Luxembourg)

As I have already had occasion to state, the economic horizon is clearing, but there remains an immense amount to be done before we can ensure the healthy, lasting growth of our economies and to continue and give a new momentum to the process of development. This task is the responsibility of us all and we shall succeed in it only by dialogue and co-operation. The European Community, which is shortly to be enriched by the addition of two new members, Spain and Portugal, will shoulder its share of that responsibility. We appeal to all our partners in the North and the South to join in these efforts.

The fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, which we are celebrating this year, is not the end of a journey. This anniversary should, rather, serve as a point of departure. Together we must look towards the future and redouble our efforts to translate into reality the principles of the Charter and the sentiments expressed from this rostrum. Only in this way and by perseverance can we enable the United Nations to assure all mankind of a better future.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.