

**REPORT
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE
WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-SECOND SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 1 (A/42/1)



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Over the past year, in the midst of continuing regional strife and economic and social hardship, there have been occasions in which a greater solidarity among nations was evident in addressing serious problems with global implications, within the multilateral framework of the United Nations. This development, while limited and fragmentary, could prove of broad significance for I believe it has its origins in what I would call the growing commonality factor in international affairs. By this I mean a commonly accepted interest in meeting successfully certain vital global challenges, including achievement of the conditions for sustained economic development, the preservation of a hospitable global environment, the elimination of the most egregious infringements of human rights, the eradication of threats to the health of societies and of individuals that respect no national borders, and, by no means least, the avoidance of nuclear destruction. Countries of disparate political orientations and economic systems have begun to deal with problems of an interdependent world with a new pragmatism in awareness of the dangers of immobility. This can provide a promising basis for broadened multilateral co-operation and increased effectiveness of the United Nations. It is as if the sails of the small boat in which all the people of the earth are gathered had caught again, in the midst of a perilous sea, a light but favourable wind.

The United Nations has been an important catalyst for consensus on global problems and, at the same time is itself, I believe, the object of a greater commonality of view than when I last reported to the General Assembly. It remains prey to a financial crisis of very damaging dimensions. Yet, there has been a perceptible rallying to the Organization prompted, in part, by recognition that it was in serious jeopardy but, more decisively, I am convinced, by changes in the international political, economic and social situation which evidenced with persuasive clarity the need for, and the unique value of, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.

These months sometimes seemed dominated by financial crisis and administrative reform. I believe that, in the circumstances, it is especially important to recognize the inherent strength shown by the United Nations in bringing nations together in pursuit of common objectives ranging from ending the war between Iran and Iraq to protection of the environment and combating illicit narcotics. From such recognition can come new champions and the greater support that the United Nations needs in extending the favourable trend perceptible on certain problems across a wider spectrum of issues related to the achievement of a world at peace.

In highlighting certain positive developments of recent months, I would not wish to underestimate the highly unsatisfactory state of world conditions or the magnitude of the tasks that lie ahead. Even if the favourable wind felt this year prevails, our global vessel will need skilful piloting and the assistance of dedicated oarsmen to navigate the many shoals and reach safe landfall in the next century. What developments have suggested these past

months is that it can be done—that in the face of great challenges nations can, as at times in the past, work together. The result, I believe, can be fuller realization of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, ultimately, a new chance for peace.

I

The international security situation during the past year has been far from static. While major conflicts have persisted and neither the number nor the lethal quality of arms has yet been reduced, initiatives have been taken, negotiations have been carried forward, and the Security Council has acted in ways that in themselves constitute hopeful change. I sense a broadened appreciation that present regional conflicts, beyond the intrinsic suffering they cause, entail unacceptable risks for the larger international community and that the number of nuclear weapons at present deployed is, from every point of view, unwarranted.

The war between Iran and Iraq has lasted now for almost eight blood-stained years, endangering the entire region and threatening larger strife. Last year, these protracted hostilities showed signs of dangerous escalation and expansion, pointing to the urgent need for a new United Nations effort to end the bloodshed. In January, I called for the Security Council to consult, possibly at the level of foreign ministers, on action to halt the war, having already in 1985 suggested to the parties eight points that could serve as a basis for terminating hostilities and opening the way to peace. The Council acted decisively, adopting unanimously a resolution ordering immediate implementation of the cease-fire called for earlier and defining steps to be taken by the two countries in order to establish a basis for peace. The five permanent members have served as the motor force in the Council's action, exercising the responsibility from which their special status derives. The Security Council's resolution is an unmistakable manifestation of the deep desire of the international community to bring an end to this strife. It lays down a carefully crafted basis for addressing the legitimate concerns of both belligerents. The resolution assigns me a clear mandate which, at the time of this writing, I am attempting to implement in its many dimensions through intensive discussions with the two Governments. This will now take me to Iran and Iraq. Given the co-operation of the parties, we must hope for an early comprehensive settlement which will satisfy the demands of justice and honour.

At the beginning of this year, I undertook a special effort to pursue the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. With the widespread support of the international community, I held numerous consultations with the parties and the members of the Security Council. These consultations focused on both the principle of a conference and questions of procedure. The views expressed to me differed in nuance and detail, but it was generally hoped that they could be sufficiently narrowed to make possible the convening of a conference

at which the more difficult substantive issues could be tackled in a constructive spirit. Unfortunately, it has not yet proved possible to obtain the agreement of all the parties to the principle of an international conference and this has hindered my efforts to make progress on the procedural issues. Bilateral efforts to promote the peace process have also apparently run into difficulties. In spite of these set-backs the search must by all means be sustained for a comprehensive settlement through a negotiating process, under United Nations auspices, in which all parties would participate.

It has now been 20 years since the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 242 (1967), which at the time was viewed as a major first step towards a settlement of all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this period, the inhabitants of the region have been subjected to two major wars. A continuation of the *status quo* is contrary to the interests of all the parties concerned—it hampers economic development, social stability, and freedom of choice. In the search for a comprehensive settlement, the central priority should be the achievement of a just and lasting peace, which will meet the aspirations of all the people in the region. It would seem to me that the emphasis should be more on these objectives than on questions of procedure. The right road, obviously, is that which will lead to fruitful negotiations, based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and take fully into account the rights of the Palestinians. From my extensive consultations, I am convinced that the composition and agenda of a conference do not need to present insurmountable obstacles. No solution can be found without negotiations. Delay can only prolong the violence and danger that have become daily companions to life in the Middle East.

In other parts of the world, too, new opportunities are evident to settle long-standing differences and move towards more positive and fruitful relationships. Two countries in Africa, Mali and Burkina Faso, have accepted a judgment of the International Court of Justice to resolve a border dispute between them, and in Central America, El Salvador and Honduras have submitted a similar dispute of long standing to the Court for judgment. In doing so, these countries have taken the route prescribed in the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes—the route of reason and peace.

Despite recurrent tensions in the area and the persistence of the conflict in Kampuchea, I believe there are also opportunities for strengthening peace in South-East Asia. The countries of the region share a deep interest in economic development and reconstruction. It is evident that a resolution of the Kampuchean problem would open significant new opportunities—indeed, it is of crucial importance. I have continued to follow this problem closely and have put forward to the countries concerned some ideas in the hope of furthering a solution. I have recently detected some signs of movement that I hope will develop in the right direction. Meanwhile, United Nations humanitarian assistance continues to reach Kampucheans, especially in the border area with Thailand.

In the case of the Western Sahara, there is also, I believe, an opportunity to move ahead. As requested by the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and I have had a number of separate meetings with the parties aimed at a solution of the problem. During these meetings, our discussions have focused on modalities governing a cease-fire and a referendum. Since an examination of these issues involves certain factual information available only in the territory, the Chairman of OAU and I consider that they can best

be gathered by the dispatch of a technical survey team to the territory. Once the information is obtained, we will be in a position to formulate a set of proposals with the objective of providing a fair and reasonable basis for a settlement of this problem. I am confident that with the necessary flexibility and determination, further progress towards a settlement can be made.

The long-standing confrontation between North and South Korea is a remnant, in a sense, of the Second World War which left the Korean Peninsula divided. There have been this past year a series of proposals emanating from both the North and the South for the resumption of talks on overcoming the contentious issues between the two sides. In my continuing contacts with the parties, I have made clear my readiness to be of every appropriate assistance in facilitating steps to reduce the causes of tension on the peninsula. Serious talks aimed at reducing the hardships imposed on Koreans because of separation would correspond with the pragmatic approach that increasingly influences relationships in East Asia. The agreement reached this year between China and Portugal on the return of Macao to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, like the earlier agreement between China and the United Kingdom on Hong Kong, is an example of the benefits for the international community that can come from this approach. In South Asia, yet a further example can be found in the newly formed South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation. The success that it achieves in promoting region-wide socio-economic co-operation can have a favourable impact on political relations as well.

Efforts to resolve the problem related to Afghanistan have reached an advanced stage. The lengthy, non-polemical negotiations, conducted through the good offices of the Secretary-General, are aimed at finding a realistic settlement. Significant progress has been made. For a settlement to be realized, however, the Afghans must achieve a national reconciliation that will open the way for the formation of a government where the voice of all the Afghans—those now living outside as well as inside Afghanistan—will be heard. It now remains for all concerned to reach the kind of decisions required to restore peace and to accord to the Afghan people the rights foreseen for all in the United Nations Charter. I am confident that the United Nations will, with the full support of Member States, be able to meet any tasks foreseen for it in a settlement. I need hardly emphasize again the great benefits that a neutral, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan would bring for the parties directly involved and, also, for broader international relationships on which progress on other issues heavily depends.

As conscious as I of the gravity of the tension and violence in Central America, the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States joined me late last year in making known to the countries of the region the facilities that the two organizations could provide—separately or together—to facilitate resolution of the region's problems. I have always been persuaded that such a resolution must be found by the countries of Central America themselves, but when I toured the region with the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora and Support Groups and the Secretary-General of OAS last January, I found little evidence of political will to solve the continuing conflicts. The peace plan to which they agreed last month in Guatemala on the basis of a proposal of the President of Costa Rica is all the more to be welcomed as an important breakthrough. I now feel encouraged to revise my earlier assessment. There appears to exist a genuine momentum for peace. The provisions of the peace plan show respect for the commitments made by these

countries for the peaceful resolution of disputes under the Charter of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States. For my part, I have agreed, in support of the peace process, to serve as a member of the International Committee for Verification and Follow-up, created by the Guatemala agreement of 7 August 1967, and I will extend any additional assistance in ways that are appropriate under the Charter. The support of the international community as a whole will be much needed in the further crucial negotiations that lie ahead. This opportunity for peace, created, I believe, by the leaders of the region in pragmatic response to the most basic needs of their peoples, must not pass.

Unfortunately, in southern Africa the road towards the peaceful settlement of the problems of the region continues to be difficult to traverse. To a great extent, this is a consequence of systematic racial discrimination represented by the policy of *apartheid*, and of the unjustified delay in the transition to independence of Namibia.

In South Africa, a human tragedy of overwhelming proportions appears imminent unless timely action is taken to prevent it. As has been particularly manifest over the past year, the policy of *apartheid* leads inevitably to resistance and oppression and poisons the quality of life for all the inhabitants of the country. An institutionalized system of racial discrimination that denies fundamental human rights to the great majority of the population is contrary to the most basic principles of the United Nations Charter to which all Member States have committed themselves. The destructive consequences of the imposition of this system extends beyond South Africa to encompass the region as a whole, which has been victimized by repeated acts of aggression, sabotage and destabilization. The effects have been particularly devastating in Angola and Mozambique. In the latter country, the situation became so acute that the Government requested my support in mobilizing international assistance to alleviate the hunger and suffering to which its people have been tragically subjected. The front-line States need increased support from the international community to counter economic strangulation and political destabilization.

The continued denial of independence to Namibia also breeds unending violence and suffering. I have, this past month, sent my Special Representative for Namibia to the region to explore ways of ending the impasse regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). His conversations have confirmed that, if the situation is re-examined with realism and sincere concern for the well-being of the inhabitants of the area, it should be possible to open the way for implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia.

I would appeal to all Member States to use their influence on behalf of the development of social and economic progress in freedom throughout southern Africa. This can only take place in adequate measure if *apartheid* disappears; if the human rights of all South Africans, and of the inhabitants of the region as a whole, are respected; and if the people of Namibia are permitted to enjoy the freedom and independence that are their right. The concerted action of the international community is needed to achieve these goals.

The Cyprus problem should lend itself to fair settlement through serious, purposeful negotiations that will meet the basic interests of both sides. Encouraging developments have, on a number of occasions, brought the two Cypriot communities to the threshold of real progress. At present, however, the state of affairs in Cyprus gives increasing cause for concern and, as I have reported

to the Security Council, a potentially dangerous military build-up is taking place on the island. The possibility of serious confrontations cannot be excluded in the months ahead if present trends continue. The troop-contributing Governments, without whose generosity the peace-keeping force could not be maintained on Cyprus, are increasingly dissatisfied both with the lack of progress towards a settlement and the growing financial burden they bear. It is particularly disturbing that, in these circumstances, efforts to reactivate productive negotiations are deadlocked. I intend to continue to explore possible measures that might encourage greater confidence and make it possible for useful negotiations to resume. What is at stake is the goal of a federal republic of Cyprus, non-aligned and enjoying sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity as defined in the High-level Agreements of 1977 and 1979.

The prolongation of a regional conflict endangers far more than the parties immediately concerned. In all the problems to which I have referred—those in which positive movement has occurred and those still mired in impasse—governmental decisions will be made which, depending on their nature, can positively or negatively affect the lives and futures of the populations of their region and beyond. I would call upon all leaders in areas of conflict to be guided by this consideration when making decisions in which an added element of accommodation to the concerns of the other party can bring peace or break a sterile deadlock.

II

In the resolution of almost every regional conflict in which the United Nations is engaged, a need for United Nations peace-keeping operations can be foreseen. In the case of Namibia, the agreed United Nations plan entails both military forces and civilian staff carrying out crucial peace-keeping functions in the transition to independence. In other instances new and innovative forms of peace-keeping may be called for. Various conflicts in recent years have extended to the sea, raising the possible need for a United Nations role in ensuring the safety of civilian ships and in maintaining peace at sea as an element in bringing a war to an end. Any peace maintenance operation in the ocean area would differ in key respects from peace-keeping on land, although the same broad principles would apply. At present it would be difficult to mount such operations as quickly on an *ad hoc* basis as has been the case with land-based operations. There is, therefore, need to plan and be prepared for such eventualities, a process for which the advice of experts in the international academic and defense communities could usefully be sought.

In referring to possible future peace-keeping undertakings, I cannot fail to commend those who, during the past year, have maintained this noble mission for peace. Sacrifices have been a part of their services, particularly in southern Lebanon where brave soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon have daily risked their lives and 21 have died in the line of duty since last August in protecting the well-being of others. The value of these operations has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Security Council. The valour and dedication of those who serve are deeply appreciated by the entire international community.

As essential as the deployment of peace-keeping forces has been, and can be in the future, in maintaining a stable situation after the cessation of armed exchange, in the separation of forces, and in affording an opportunity for negotiations, it is not a substitute for the first function of

the United Nations which is to prevent war from breaking out. Indeed, the serious crises addressed this past year many of which are of long standing — point to the need to take timely and effective multilateral action before problems reach crisis proportions. To continue in the future to fail to utilize fully all the preventive capacity of multilateral organizations would be foolhardy in the extreme. One of the greatest tragedies of recent years has been the outbreak of fratricidal conflict between developing countries that had at their disposal for the resolution of their differences the assistance of regional organizations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and, of course, of the United Nations itself.

I would suggest that the Security Council can in the future make fuller use of possibilities available within the meaning of the Charter, including peace-keeping forces, to head off violence and facilitate the resolution of disputes before armed conflict occurs. When a potentially dangerous situation is identified, a fact-finding mission can be quickly dispatched *en route* to gain a detailed knowledge of the problem and to signal to the parties the concern of the United Nations as a whole. It is auspicious for this purpose that present peace-keeping operations now have the political support of all permanent members of the Council although the financial support from Member States is far from adequate. I have sought through a restructuring of the political functions in the Secretariat to strengthen our early-warning capacity.

The need for international solidarity in preventive action is by no means limited to political crises. It is especially evident in the face of such a global threat as environmental degradation. In the case of the recent food crisis in Africa, the international community, through the United Nations and other international organizations, did a great deal to mitigate the disaster. But, the disaster need not have been of such proportions. The vulnerability of the fragile ecosystems and economies of many African countries has long been widely understood. Too little preventive action was undertaken to strengthen their resistance to disaster.

In the recent past, we have seen other natural calamities of terrible impact — the volcanic eruption in Colombia, the earthquake in Mexico City, the recurrent floods in Bangladesh being among the worst. Like the drought in Africa, such catastrophes could not have been prevented, nor can they be in the future. Their destructive effect can, however, be lessened. The ability to foresee the most likely location and, to a more limited extent, the possible timing of certain types of disasters such as severe earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, typhoons and drought, has grown significantly. Moreover, a substantial knowledge exists of measures that can be taken in advance to mitigate the effect of natural disasters when they do occur. I believe there is much merit in proposals that have been made to stimulate international study, planning and preparations on this subject over the next decade under the auspices of the United Nations.

III

Disarmament, achieved through balanced arms reductions with adequate verification, is an essential element in the dynamic process of building peace. It has stood, rightly, in the forefront of diplomatic activity during the past year. New attitudes and revised policies have emerged, bringing new life to the long, sterile disarmament scene. For the first time, there appears a good and early prospect of a net reduction in nuclear weapons. While an agreement between the USSR and the United States to

eliminate all of their intermediate-range nuclear missiles would still leave sufficient nuclear weapons in existence to destroy the world many times over, it would none the less have real significance. Such an agreement can encourage progress in other East-West negotiations, including those on strategic weapons and, by demonstrating the present feasibility of agreement between the USSR and the United States, give impetus to other disarmament negotiations now in progress. Moreover, it can be seen as constituting a first step, at least, towards the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons for which these two major nuclear Powers have in principle renewed their support. There have already been new positive moves in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to complete the treaty — long under negotiation — banning the production and use of chemical weapons under effective verification. Progress on other agreements is overdue and, I believe, will come if the benefits of the elimination of Soviet and United States intermediate-range nuclear missiles are felt. I would point in particular to the desirability of early agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty which for many years has been seen in the United Nations as having cardinal importance. Continuation and even intensification of testing, in so far as it is directed at developing new weapons or perfecting those now deployed, will tend to mitigate the value of eliminating one present type of missile and perpetuate a competition that has been a major cause of distrust.

Verification has been a difficult element on which to find agreement in most of the disarmament negotiations now under way. This is an area in which the United Nations can make a significant contribution. The forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament can, with thorough preparation, provide a valuable opportunity to consider how the Organization's potential in this regard can be realized. Indeed, the session will permit a timely review of the entire work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, an area of vital importance where rationalization and innovation could permit the resources of Member States to be effectively focused on the most productive activities.

The regional dimension of disarmament merits much attention since it is in regional conflicts that weapons are actually being used for purposes of war. The acquisition of large quantities of sophisticated arms by developing countries places a severe strain on badly needed resources while adding nothing to the strength of their economies. Furthermore, it adds to external debt and creates a secondary demand for imports that increases their dependence. Improved regional security arrangements could reduce the need felt by them for expensive arms and large armed forces. The negotiations currently in progress in Vienna on confidence-building measures and troop reductions in Europe offer a new prospect for that continent. The establishment by the United Nations of regional centres for the promotion of peace and disarmament is an initiative of much promise in this regard in the developing world that merits the support of all Member States.

I am deeply persuaded that the entire world has greatly benefited from the preservation of certain regions — one, outer space, being infinitely larger than the earth itself — from the deployment of nuclear weapons or, in the case of the Antarctica, from any military use at all. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which was concluded under the auspices of the United

Nations. As space technology advances and a growing number of countries become involved in space activities, the Treaty assumes ever greater relevance to the common human destiny. It is the shared responsibility of Member States to ensure compliance with the letter and spirit of the Treaty. I would call upon all countries that have a space technology capability to co-operate bilaterally and multilaterally in pursuing peaceful uses of outer space, including projects that will bring the benefits of space technology to developing countries. Let the United Nations not only help to preserve such achievements as Tlatelolco, the demilitarization of Antarctica, and the Treaty prohibiting nuclear deployment on the deep seabed, but, proceeding from their example, also seek to gain new regions exclusively for peaceful use.

IV

I have recently had occasion—in particular when addressing the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development—to express my concerns about the problem-filled state of the world economy. It is evident from the discussions at the seventh session of UNCTAD and the preceding session of the Council that many of these concerns are shared by Member States. The world economy is growing much slower in the 1980s than in the previous two decades; the world financial system remains in the shadow of crisis because of the debt problem and volatile exchange rates; world trade in this decade has been under the greatest threat of protectionism since the 1930s, notwithstanding the wide advocacy of a liberal trading system; and international prices of primary commodities have dropped to their lowest level in real terms in the last 50 years. Economic growth, finance and trade are crucial elements for raising world standards of living; yet these elements have been faltering.

As a result, per capita incomes are lower today in the developing countries than they were at the beginning of the decade and unemployment in developed market economies in the 1980s has averaged twice the level of the 1970s. In 1986, 850 million people lived in countries that experienced no increase in per capita output.

The picture is not totally bleak. Inflation, once an almost universal scourge, has been brought under control or eliminated in a large number of countries. A few developing countries, both large and small, have been experiencing a sustained period of rapid economic growth. On the whole, however, the state of the global economy is highly unsatisfactory.

I find it important that in these circumstances a greater understanding has emerged of the interrelationship among economic and social problems. Because of this interrelationship, many of these problems cannot be successfully dealt with in isolation. The complex requirements of sustained development on which future conditions of life in both developing and developed countries so heavily depend have been the subject of intensive pragmatic examination. The report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, aptly titled "Our Common Future", prepared at the request of the General Assembly by experts of varied geographical and political backgrounds, defines with great clarity some of the interrelationships that must be taken into account in developing and implementing sound economic and social policies. There has also been movement towards greater integration of differing economic and trade systems, a distancing from rigidity in conforming with doctrine. I believe this trend is evident in a number

of instances during the past months in which Member States approached problems in the economic area from a pragmatic perspective taking account of the capacities offered by the United Nations.

At the seventh session of UNCTAD, the participating countries agreed by consensus on a Final Act that constitutes a very comprehensive statement on the issues facing the world economy and on the policies and measures required to address them. The substantive results of the Conference could foreshadow a significant advance towards the revitalization of development, economic growth and international trade. A constructive outcome, I would note, was by no means a foregone conclusion. A common interest in success prevailed, strengthened by the force of reason in moving forward realistically in many ways, for example, in a growth-oriented debt strategy; in balancing the need for sustainable non-inflationary growth in the developed world and for an environment supportive of growth in the developing world; and in giving impetus to international co-operation in commodities. The purposefulness and flexibility shown by all participating groups in reaching consensus within the framework of a United Nations conference are promising signs for constructive, pragmatic multilateral co-operation in the economic field.

The results reached at the seventh session of UNCTAD can have a significant bearing not least on the critical economic situation in Africa. I must point out, in this connection, that implementation on the part of donors and creditors of the understanding reached at the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, in 1986, on approaches to adjustment and external debt in Africa has been slow and uncertain. Many African countries have begun to make sharp and wide-ranging adjustment efforts in specific sectors, especially agriculture, and in overall economic management. But the international community has been less forthcoming with an intensified financial resource flow. Because the economic reforms were being undermined in many countries, I established, after consultations with interested Governments and the managements of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, a group of high-level advisers from various regions and charged them with reporting to me before the end of this year on concrete ways to improve the financial situation of African countries. I believe that the recommendations of this Advisory Group on Financial Flows to Africa can encourage further efforts realistically conceived for specific situations.

Other recent steps towards improving the African situation are encouraging. In the Paris Club, debt to official creditors has begun to be rescheduled on considerably more generous terms for selected countries. Proposals to increase net resource flows through the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral agencies are also being discussed with a greater sense of urgency. What we must ensure is that a comprehensive approach to the financing problem results, one that will accelerate Africa's implementation of its priority programme for adjustment and place the region on a path to more rapid development.

A highly significant agreement has been reached among a number of Member States, both signatories and non-signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, settling conflicts that had occurred in the claims they had put forward for deep sea-bed mine sites. This agreement, reflecting as it does a realistic assessment of shared interests in orderly exploitation of the resources of the deep sea-bed, should contribute to wider acceptance of the Convention's sea-bed régime. The United Nations, through the Preparatory Commission for the

International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, has now taken the historic step of registering for the first time a sea-bed claim — that of India — and reserved an equivalent area for international exploitation. The Convention, which is now poised somewhat precariously at mid-point with 34 of the required 60 ratifications, has, of course, far more than economic significance. The Convention's first purpose is to prevent conflicts over the space, the uses, and the resources of the seas and oceans. The ocean-related nature of recent tensions and hostilities in several areas serves as a constant reminder of the need for full acceptance of this major legal instrument. I would hope that the same realistic assessment of common interests that led to the agreement on mining sites and opened the way for the first site registration will bring the ratification of, or accession to, the Convention by those States that have not yet done so.

I believe that it is also symptomatic of a more pragmatic approach in the fields of trade and development that Member States have increasingly sought the assistance of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations in developing national legislation to facilitate their integration into the growing transnational sector of the global economy. Through its advisory and information services, the Centre actively helps countries in dealing with the various ways in which the integration process can proceed. This process would be much facilitated by the increased predictability and stability that a code of conduct for transnational corporations could bring. A large measure of agreement on a draft has existed for some time. I would hope that before another year passes a final text will be approved.

V

It must be a continuing purpose of the United Nations to encourage universal respect for human rights and bring to this and to other major social problems the force of international co-operation. Respect for human rights is part — and an important part — of the dynamic process of building a peaceful world. I seek, in my capacity as Secretary-General, continually to promote such respect and to ensure that the Secretariat carries out its important responsibilities in this area with full effectiveness. I believe that the activities of the United Nations, aimed at bringing the widest compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other United Nations human rights instruments, have, despite financial constraints, gathered further momentum this past year. The growing international participation in dealing with human rights issues, especially the dedicated, energetic efforts of non-governmental organizations, is having a positive effect. Open debate about situations of concern now takes place regularly in various United Nations bodies meeting at different times of the year, and fact-finding into specific situations is done on an ongoing basis. I would urge that in those cases where full co-operation has been denied the Government concerned give renewed consideration to the matter. I believe the advisory services of the United Nations with growing emphasis on national human rights systems are of special importance in this respect. Technical assistance from the United Nations has proven useful in the development of means for concrete, practical action.

With the establishment of the United Nations, respect for human rights throughout the world was recognized for the first time as the legitimate concern of the international community. In these past four decades, violations of human rights have not been eliminated, but very real

progress has been achieved. The world now is alert to infringements of human rights as never before. Their occurrence in any systematic form does not go unnoticed. The United Nations is an important factor in ensuring this is the case. I believe we are seeing evidence now of the Organization's importance also as a forum for concerted action aimed at encouraging rectification of unsatisfactory human rights situations wherever they may be. This is the direction in which we must move with a unified sense of purpose. We now are approaching the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I would urge that, in order to increase yet further the benefits brought by that seminal Declaration — the complementary instruments agreed in the United Nations, further defining the rights to which all are entitled and providing procedures to encourage respect for them, be universally ratified and rigorously observed.

In the area of social concerns, I would point to two noteworthy instances in which Member States in past months have joined in constructive efforts to meet serious global threats. In June of this year, 138 nations of every political orientation and every stage of economic development gathered together in Vienna in a Conference convened by the United Nations at my suggestion to combat drug abuse throughout the world. In 10 days of harmonious, purposeful discussions, the delegates drew up a 35-point plan for a comprehensive, international attack on this scourge. The Conference was both a negotiation and a market-place of ideas and technology. It afforded a glimpse of a workable future in which nations set aside fundamental differences and polemics to face squarely a common threat. There needs now to be a sustained and well-co-ordinated follow-up, nationally, internationally, and in the United Nations system, imbued with this same dedication and realism. The United Nations is already playing a major role in countering drug abuse, being particularly effective in providing technical assistance to developing countries. The recent substantial growth in the resources of the Fund for Drug Abuse Control has permitted the geographical expansion of its programmes. It now receives support from all political and regional groupings — further evidence of jointly accepted responsibility to fight together against a common threat.

Drug abuse can and does undermine the fabric of societies and ruin the lives of uncounted individuals. Degradation of the environment can prejudice life itself and the means of livelihood for all. In facing this threat, too, nations are working together in common purpose within the framework of the United Nations. Spurred by the alarming discovery that there is a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica, Member States, acting under the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, adopted at Vienna on 22 March 1985, this year registered willingness gradually to phase out chlorofluorocarbons even though for some this will involve painful short-term adjustments. The benefits of this action will be felt by all the world's inhabitants for succeeding generations.

The Secretariat needs to be structured in such a way as to support with maximum effectiveness the work of the United Nations in promoting respect for human rights and encouraging broad understanding of the social dimensions of global problems. The organization of the Secretariat should reflect the importance of these issues. Having this in mind, I have, as part of the broad reform measures now under way in the Secretariat, consolidated activities on social policy and social development in the United Nations Office at Vienna and on human rights in the United Nations Office at Geneva. This should permit the United Nations to serve Member States better and

speaking with a clearer and more coherent voice on these issues.

I am very happy to note the recognition expressed by many Member States of the skilful assistance rendered by the Secretariat in the instances of progress that I have mentioned in both the economic and social fields, for all of which the United Nations provided the necessary framework and often the catalyst as well.

VI

The more one reflects upon many of the economic and social issues of the day, the more apparent their multi-dimensional character becomes, involving close interaction between economic, social, and, sometimes, political variables. The symbiosis of development, environment and population is beginning to be appreciated. We know that the remedy for drug abuse must be composed of many elements, economic, social and legal. Arms limitation efforts are hampered in some areas by social and economic factors that frequently invite violence and instability, as well as by political tensions. The interrelationship between disarmament, development and security is being usefully highlighted by the current United Nations Conference on the subject. In playing its essential part in dealing with this web of global problems, the United Nations system will need to be more fully integrated, and better able to follow priorities established for the system as a whole. It will be of ever greater importance that tasks be rationally distributed among the organizations of the system and that their capacities be used in complementary ways in order to gain maximum benefit from available resources to meet the growing needs of an ever more demanding world.

Today, there is no representative intergovernmental body in the United Nations that is able to provide authoritative guidance to Member States and to the organizations of the United Nations system with regard to priorities of global programmes, the allocation of responsibilities, and the utilization of assistance resources. Most of the specialized agencies and some of the organizations of the United Nations itself have governing bodies that meet at the ministerial level. Yet, the Economic and Social Council, which is charged in the Charter with co-ordination and policy formulation for the economic and social activities of the system, is not constituted by representatives of such authoritative rank. I believe this should be corrected. For optimum effectiveness, the Council might become, in practice, a Council of Ministers for Economic and Social Affairs which would have the authority to review the medium-term plans or equivalent documents of all the organizations of the United Nations system, thus contributing to rational utilization of resources in the light of global priorities as defined by the Council and giving greater strength and coherence to the system as a whole. The Council, with an enhanced participation of the specialized agencies, could keep world economic and social developments under review and suggest modifications of programmes to meet changing circumstances and new exigencies. The cabinet-rank Council members, who might vary, or be augmented, according to the economic or social issue under consideration, would be able to speak with much greater authority than is the case. Given the orientation of such a Council, the present deliberative function of the Economic and Social Council might, in part or in whole, be assumed by the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. This would require careful analysis.

This concept, if followed, would obviously lead to a radical change in the functioning of the Economic and

Social Council, but I believe it might be more consonant with the original intent of the Charter than the way in which the Council has functioned until now. I put it forward in this report because I believe events of the past year have further shown the need for greater integration of United Nations activities to correspond with the need for more integrated approaches to problems in the economic and social fields. I hope that, along with other suggestions that have been made on this subject, it will stimulate early and serious consideration by Member States of the direction in which we should move. I feel compelled to state that in recent years the effectiveness of the Council in providing intellectual leadership and the needed co-ordination of United Nations economic and social activities has been inadequate. I would add also that the incremental reforms undertaken over the years to improve the functioning of the Economic and Social Council have not had the desired effect. We need to focus on what the Council should do rather than on how it can better perform what it has been doing. It is now particularly important that the United Nations be so organized as to bring maximum benefit from what I believe is a nascent consensus among Member States in meeting global problems.

To encourage an integrated approach to problems and take advantage of the human resources of the system, I believe a small policy planning staff for development, which would include representatives of relevant specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, could also be of great value. Such a staff could consider integrated approaches to development-related problems and objectives that would take account of the capacities of the system as a whole.

VII

I am aware that the readiness of Governments to utilize the United Nations as the forum for dealing with many of the problems that I have outlined in the preceding sections of this report will depend in part upon their appreciation of its efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, I welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly, at its forty-first session, of resolution 41/213 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations — a step that could signify a major turning-point for the United Nations at this critical time. As I mentioned in my progress report to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination earlier this year, the objectives put forward by the Assembly in that resolution can only be achieved if Member States and the Secretariat face together our responsibilities. My views on the direct relationship between any changes in the intergovernmental machinery and modification in the size, composition and work of the Secretariat staff are a matter of record.

The proposed programme budget for the forthcoming biennium that I have submitted to the General Assembly is 1.8 per cent less than the revised appropriation for the present biennium and reflects a number of the austerity measures that I have already taken. A rigorous programme-by-programme review has been launched in order to identify the specific functions where post reductions can best be accommodated. Secretariat structures in the political areas have been streamlined and more effectively organized, and a review of the economic and social sectors is under way. A restructuring of the Department of Administration and Management has been effected and substantial changes in the Department of Public Information are now being initiated. I am con-

vinced that these measures will enhance the ability of the United Nations to discharge its responsibilities.

I must make clear that the necessary prolongation of austerity measures, including the freeze on staff recruitment and restrictions on meetings, has an adverse effect on programme implementation and on the Secretariat staff, although I have sought to minimize both. The mechanisms for staff-management consultations that have proven fruitful in the past have become especially important. In fact, the staff have been active partners in the search for the best means of implementing the reform measures mandated by the General Assembly. More effective communication between staff and management at the department level and at the Secretariat-wide level is still needed, however, to reinforce the co-operation shown in the face of the present critical situation.

With the staff reductions, significant financial savings in the regular budget will be realized. At the same time, these reductions can, in themselves, require special allocations of funds and some additional resources will also be needed to strengthen the Secretariat through the provision of enhanced training, the improvement of career development prospects and the use of computer processing and office automation. We must also continue to design incentives to attract and retain highly talented staff in the service of the Organization with the equitable geographic distribution foreseen in the Charter and in the resolutions of the General Assembly. While the recruitment freeze will inevitably set back the rate of achievement of our earlier goals, special measures are being taken to ensure that competent women in the Secretariat attain senior-level positions through the promotion process. Our experience this past year has shown that much can be achieved in this manner. I have during this period appointed three women to posts at the rank of Under-Secretary-General.

The financial crisis which made necessary the austerity measures and encouraged the reforms that are now being implemented stemmed from more profound causes than dissatisfaction with the administrative efficiency of the United Nations. Deep-seated political differences gave rise to a turning away in some quarters from multilateralism and to the rejection by some Member States of adopted programmes. This led to the withholding of assessed contributions which, in combination with the late payment of assessments, brought about the present crisis. As I have described in the preceding sections of this report, there have been indications of a renewed recognition of the importance of the United Nations in facing global problems. The major contributor has reaffirmed the binding nature of budgetary assessments decided by the General Assembly. Many Member States have demonstrated their faith in the value of the United Nations by providing financial assistance, some beyond their assessed contributions, in response to the acute need of the Organization.

In light of these developments and the reforms that are in progress, I look forward to the early restoration of the financial soundness of the Organization. I must emphasize, however, that this has not yet occurred. There is as yet no assurance that payment of assessed contributions will meet the minimum austerity operating expenses. Orderly administrative management is seriously handicapped when there is uncertainty as to receipt of a significant portion of the regular programme budget. The reforms that are being implemented will do much to bring about the efficient organization in which Member States can have confidence. The financial viability and the operational effectiveness of the United Nations will depend primarily, however, on compliance by all Mem-

ber States with the financial requirements of membership.

The pragmatic approach of Member States in seeking together solutions to economic and social problems and the unity displayed by the Security Council in recent weeks are developments which restore a vision of what can be accomplished through the United Nations in bringing a safer, more equitable, and more prosperous world. It is a vision that Member States need to reclaim. It may seem contradictory to speak at the same time of pragmatism and vision. I believe, however, that a vision without the definition of realistic means of approaching it can lead to disillusionment and cynicism. That, to a certain extent, is what has happened in the years since the United Nations was founded with a vision of peace.


The Charter of the United Nations defines the principles to be followed in gaining peace in the fullest meaning of what true peace entails. These principles have lost none of their relevance or validity. What has too often been lacking is the readiness of Member States to put aside national differences and national ambitions and work together within the United Nations in accordance with these principles towards common goals. It is my belief that the commonality factor, to which I referred as I began this report and which derives from a realistic assessment by Member States of national interests in the face of global challenges, can do much to bring this about. It is factually evident that these challenges, many of which I have mentioned, including, most important, the prevention of nuclear war, affect the security and well-being of all countries. It is a matter of their individual national interest to work together with others within a multilateral framework since the challenges cannot otherwise be successfully met. For the most part, they are by their nature susceptible primarily to pragmatic measures. In an ideologically divided world, this can provide a basis of unity in action as I believe it has in some cases begun to do. In my expectation, countries that have the experience of putting aside national differences in dealing realistically with global threats to economic and social well-being will more easily do the same in seeking resolutions to political problems that can equally, and even more immediately, affect conditions of life on earth. In these circumstances, the relevance and potential of the United Nations increases as the existing and natural universal instrument for international co-operation on global problems.

The United Nations in its agenda has until now kept pace with global change. Indeed, on occasion, it has set the pace for such change. In the process, it has, perhaps, expanded at times beyond the limits of its managerial capacity and the availability of resources. The budgetary and administrative reforms that are now under way should do much to correct those weaknesses that exist. There will remain, however, a need for the Organization to be ever attentive to the changing needs of a planet in flux and to be sensitive to the wisest ideas and counsel that the intellectual community of the world has to offer. For this, I am convinced that the United Nations must develop a greater capacity to associate with its global mission statesmen and scientists of the highest calibre from around the world. Such a partnership with, I believe, like the non-governmental organizations on which the effectiveness of the United Nations heavily depends, strengthen the United Nations as a vehicle through which the intellectual resources and the practical experience of the international community can be integrated in con-

fronting the demands of the coming years. I shall do all that I can in the years ahead to develop and nurture such an association.

The peaceful resolution of problems depends more than anything else on a convergence of interests. The past year has, I believe, been a time of clarification in this respect. I have no doubt that such convergence now exists on important issues confronting the world. The beginning, evident in the past year, of the translation of this convergence into practical agreements needs to be, and can be, pursued in sustained dialogue and negotiations, and, I would urge, expanded in undertakings that bring

together the capacities of nations for the common benefit of humanity. We must see this as a major element in the dynamic process of achieving peace -- a process defined in the Charter and in which the United Nations has an indispensable role.



JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR
Secretary-General

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