REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY-GENERAL

ON THE

WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-THIRD SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 1 (A/33/1)

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1978

[*Original: English*]
[*12 September 1977*]

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I

In the past year the United Nations has been actively engaged on an unprecedentedly wide range of problems. In terms of hours worked, meetings held or journeys made, there has never been a more active or more arduous year. While the purpose of some of its most important activities may be rather to prevent the worst from happening than to achieve a spectacular solution, the Organization has also achieved notable progress this year on some extremely difficult problems. The pragmatic and realistic approach which has begun to emerge over the last few years has resulted in practical results which provide an opportunity for the Organization to show its potential and to develop its capacity. This is encouraging in terms of the problems themselves and also for the future of the United Nations.

Even the most casual consideration of the daily developments in our world provides clear evidence that global organization and global order, however imperfect or sometimes ineffective they may at present be, are an increasingly indispensable necessity. The fact that the world is becoming at the same time more nationally diverse and more interdependent, that power, in the old sense of the word, is more fragmented and that violence is ever more pervasive and dangerous, affords both the strongest argument for world order and the reason why it is so difficult to achieve. It is precisely because we live in a world of nation States jealous of their sovereignty and often fearful of their neighbours, a world of regional conflicts, deepening poverty, economic dislocation, exploding populations and deteriorating environments, a world overshadowed by the existence of weapons of mass destruction, that the development of a strong and effective United Nations system is a vital imperative. In such a situation we cannot afford despair or cynicism, tempting though such attitudes may sometimes be. We can, and must, develop a sense of human solidarity, finding practical expression in a strong family of international institutions, if our major international problems are to be contained and ultimately solved.

Such an approach requires simultaneous progress in several areas. It requires progress on disarmament. It requires concerted and constructive efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully, especially in the Middle East and southern Africa. It requires a practical and effective approach to the better distribution of global economic opportunities. It requires realistic co-operative approaches to the correction of legitimate grievances. It requires, above all, a universal effort to rise above narrow nationalistic aims in the pursuit of global objectives.

Much groundwork has already been done in all of these fields, but it would be idle to ignore the feelings of frustration which persist in many quarters for different reasons. Some are frustrated by the difficulty of securing practical action or the redress of long-standing grievances and inequities, others by what they regard as the prevalence of unrealistic rhetoric over workable and realistic compromise. All too often these frustrations are vented on the international organizations which provide the best hope of relieving them.

It is important that this tendency should not conceal the true causes of our difficulties or weaken the organizations which have been set up to solve them. It is no longer widely questioned that some of our greatest problems can only be handled by multilateral action. It is essential therefore to develop international organizations in such a way that Governments and people have confidence in them and give them the means to secure practical results. Used properly, for example, the United Nations can be the instrument for overcoming much of the sense of mistrust and insecurity which makes so many international problems insoluble. I am glad that it is being increasingly used for this purpose.

There is one source of disillusionment with the United Nations as an instrument of international co-operation which is due in some degree, I believe, to the way in which we are accustomed to speak of great problems. In the United Nations, as in the world at large, we speak much of settlements—usually just and lasting—and solutions—usually long-term and comprehensive. This habit of speech gives the impression that, with sufficient application and ingenuity, a total solution can and will be found even to the most intractable of problems. The assumption that a total solution can always be achieved can lead to disillusionment. The problems which come to the United Nations are usually immensely complex questions. Many of them also constitute a potential threat to international peace and security. The United Nations provides a political framework where such problems can be contained, defused and treated. It also provides a place where all can agree to work together for a solution or a settlement. Very often, however, such a settlement can only come slowly through a period of evolution, during which the problem must be treated and positive forces constantly channelled in the right direction. This is a vital practical function of the United Nations which should not be overshadowed by the frustrations which arise from a failure to achieve quick and comprehensive solutions.

In the economic and social field also, talk of new strategies and programmes of action may tend to produce an over-optimism quickly succeeded by frustration. We must never forget that we are engaged in an infinitely complex historical process. We can, and must, work hard for gains that are often small in themselves, as long as we are moving forward in the right direction. The struggle for improvement is very often in itself the difference between victory and defeat, between a reasonable degree of order and total chaos. I must, however, here express my deep concern about the existing stalemate in the North-South dialogue and on major aspects of the establishment of a new international economic order. If these are not overcome

soon, there will be fundamental political repercussions as well as economic ones.

What we require, as we face the critical years ahead, is the realism and determination to develop our practical capacity to build on the foundations which have already been laid down and on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which all accept.

II

There are some aspects of the world situation in which the United Nations is not directly involved but which none the less affect deeply the atmosphere and the general framework in which its efforts to promote international co-operation are pursued. Last year I noted that East-West relationships appeared to be going through a phase of reassessment which inevitably had repercussions on many major world problems. While East-West differences are less prominent in international organizations than they used to be, they remain a key element in the current world situation and in the approach which other Governments take to the affairs of the world. We have seen this recently in the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, where the concurrent discussions of a second strategic arms limitation agreement are clearly of crucial importance to any other undertaking. All possible efforts should be made to ensure that East-West problems will not increase tensions in some of the very difficult situations which have developed in Africa, especially during the past year. Initial Security Council action on Namibia shows an encouraging tendency to work together on agreed approaches. I hope that this tendency will be reflected in other areas as well and will eventually become the predominant approach to African problems.

Any deterioration in great Power relations is inevitably a major factor in the international climate. I continue to be convinced that the great Powers are far too experienced and too wise to allow their relationships to deteriorate to the point of being a serious danger to world peace. I am, however, very much concerned at the possible interaction between the tensions which exist between them and the regional conflicts which erupt in various parts of the world from time to time. It seems to me that the major potential threat to world peace at the present time is the possibility that one or other regional conflict may unexpectedly become closely connected with the complex relationship of the great nuclear Powers and strain that relationship to the breaking point. This preoccupation is in turn connected with the problem of intervention or non-intervention in events around the world and with the highly controversial and difficult situations which arise out of military pacts, requests for military assistance and the massive supply of armaments to the opposing sides in regional conflicts.

I very much hope that the Governments of the world, and especially the greater Powers, will find, in their wisdom, a means to turn away from the struggle for spheres of influence. This struggle has led to great suffering and destruction throughout recorded history, especially for the innocent bystanders who have always constituted the overwhelming majority of the human race. One of the main reasons for setting up the United Nations was to replace the struggle for spheres of influence with a more civilized and more representative system of world order in which the nations of the world governed their relations and tackled their common problems with the agreement and participation of all, the weak as well as the strong. But this new system can succeed only if all nations whole-heartedly support it and honour the obligations and responsibilities they have accepted under the Charter. It would indeed be a tragic step backwards if we were now to give up this fundamental and hard-won advance in world affairs and revert to a system which has in the past meant the domination of the many by the few and which has constituted a permanent risk of world war. We must strive to reach a point where the system and the principles of the Charter, and not the rivalries of great Powers, are the decisive and dominant elements of the international order.

The United Nations was intended, among other things, to be the guarantor of justice and peace for all nations, and most especially for defenceless or small countries which would otherwise have no recourse in a world dominated exclusively by power politics. We have to face the fact that at the present time the United Nations is not always in a position to exercise this essential function, and that there are many situations in which military power or political influence are far more significant factors than the principles of justice and the rights of all nations as expressed in the Charter. In the present political circumstances, the United Nations is seldom, if ever, in a position to enforce its decisions and has little means of making them effective in the face of determined opposition. This fact has tended to downgrade the prestige and effectiveness of the Organization and to detract from its primary purpose as the impartial and respected guarantor of international peace and security. The practical result has been that some small States no longer turn to the United Nations as the protector of their sovereign rights.

For this and other reasons, there are now, as always, conflict situations which Governments do not wish to bring before the United Nations. Recent developments in the Horn of Africa and in Zaire are good cases in point. While I do not question the reasons why Governments have not seen fit to bring such problems to the United Nations, I do believe that when problems of such magnitude do not come before the world Organization, and when they cannot be dealt with effectively by the appropriate regional organization, they constitute a potential risk to international peace and security which is of legitimate concern to all Governments. I know there are understandable reasons why it is often considered inadvisable to involve the Security Council in such matters. However, the world community must come to terms with the danger of unexpected developments and connexions arising from regional conflicts. A more reliable and generally accepted international security system is the only logical answer to this fundamental problem.

For this to happen, Governments will have to develop far greater confidence in the Security Council's wisdom, objectivity and capacity for even-handed and effective action. This is, in the end, a challenge of historic importance to the members of the Security Council and especially to the permanent members. If we could reach a point where Governments in trouble had no hesitation in bringing their problems to the Security Council and where the Council had both the will and the means to deal objectively and effectively with such problems on their merits alone by availing itself, when necessary, of the powers conferred on it by the Charter, we would have made a decisive step forward towards world order.

In the meantime, the United Nations must continue to do its best to contain the conflicts which are before

it and to strive for a solution of their underlying causes. This effort is in itself a major contribution to international peace which should not be minimized. I hope, as the Organization proves itself increasingly effective in the situations with which it is already dealing and develops both its capacity and the confidence of its Member States in its ability to act effectively, that it will prove possible steadily to transform the present partial and improvised system of international order into something far more consistent, reliable and comprehensive.

III

The organs of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and his staff, and various Governments and groups of Governments have continued their efforts to make progress on the main political problems where the Organization has specific responsibilities. These include especially the Middle East, the problems of southern Africa, and Cyprus.

In the Middle East, despite all efforts and some new elements, real peace still eludes us. Last year most efforts to make progress were connected in one way or another with a resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East. In November 1977, however, President Sadat's historic visit to Israel provided a new approach. It remains to be seen what will finally come of the current attempt to break the prevailing impasse.

I remain convinced, however, that whatever developments may emerge, it will in the end be essential for all the parties concerned in the Middle East to be brought together again in a joint effort to find a way forward to a just and lasting settlement. I have made various suggestions in this regard and I shall not fail to do anything in my power to help the parties concerned to overcome the present stalemate. To this end I have kept close contact with the leaders in the region and the co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference.

The Middle East situation, for a mixture of compelling reasons, vitally affects not only international peace and security but the interests of the world community as a whole. However formidable the difficulties, we cannot afford to relax for a moment the attempt to find a peaceful way forward. It bears repeating that in the Middle East time is not in favour of peaceful developments. Nothing could demonstrate this point more clearly than the events in Lebanon, a country which has literally been torn apart by the stresses and strains imposed by the Middle East conflict.

In March of this year, the United Nations became even more closely involved in that agonized region of the world when, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, the Security Council decided to dispatch a United Nations peace-keeping force to the area. Later in this report I shall deal in more detail with the experiences and the lessons of this extremely challenging operation. I shall confine myself here to saying that in the face of enormous difficulties the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been successful in fulfilling much of its mandate. The completion of its task, however, will depend not only on a drastic improvement in the over-all situation in Lebanon, but also on the prospects of an improvement in the Middle East situation as a whole. Naturally it also depends on the co-operation of all the parties concerned in the problem.

The all too precise agony of Lebanon and the general apprehensions of the world at large demand, in their different ways, that the United Nations live up to its responsibilities in the Middle East. At the risk of being misunderstood, I wish to say that, if there is to be any hope of a solution, all parties to the Middle East conflict need to abandon many preconceived ideas and ingrained attitudes, that all must make a serious effort to appreciate the difficulties of their adversaries, and that all must make an attempt to come to terms with the very harsh, and often unjust, realities of this most difficult of all international problems. To the outside observer the irony of the Middle East is that this historic region, which has given so much to our civilization and which is still a great and diverse reservoir of human talent, has also become a grave danger to the rest of the world. We must together find some means of liberating the Middle East and all humanity from a nightmare that has lasted far too long.

One of the most significant events of the past year has been the development on the long-standing question of Namibia. Much remains to be done and many difficulties lie ahead, but I hope that what has already been achieved will open the way for the United Nations at last to fulfil its special responsibilities to the people of the Territory.

Progress on Namibia has not, unfortunately, been matched by similar advances on other African problems. In Southern Rhodesia the mounting unrest and violence underscore the fact that there can be no acceptable solution until majority rule is established with the agreement of all the principal parties concerned and in accordance with the principle of one man, one vote. It is particularly disappointing that it has not yet been possible to secure the agreement of the principal parties to participate in an all-party conference to chart the political future of the country, although efforts to this end are continuing. Until the leaders involved accept the inescapable fact that unilateral action will not bring about a lasting solution, the situation can only worsen, with dangerous consequences to the peace of the entire area.

While discussions continue, it is most important that the sanctions voted by the Security Council against the illegal régime be as faithfully observed by the international community as they are in the neighbouring countries of Zambia and Mozambique.

The situation in South Africa itself is a most serious cause for concern. There is little or no indication that its Government is moving away from its basic policy of institutionalized racial discrimination. The repression of opponents of *apartheid,* the banning of African leaders and organizations and the continuation of the bantustan policy can only increase tension and lead to increasingly tragic results.

Other conflict situations in Africa have not, for various reasons, become a direct concern of the United Nations. The fighting in the Horn of Africa has already resulted in vast casualties and has made more than 1 million people homeless. I have on several occasions encouraged the representatives of the Governments concerned to seek a peaceful and constructive settlement consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. I have also offered my good offices should they be required at any stage.

I have been concerned with the bitter struggle now going on in Chad and have visited both Chad and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to discuss the problem. The good offices of some African Governments seem now to show signs of producing results, and I sincerely hope that peace will soon be restored to the area.

In Western Sahara a peaceful solution is also urgently required for the deteriorating situation. The lack of success in finding common ground for negotiations is deeply disturbing. The Organization of African Unity remains seized of this question. For my part, I have not failed to use my possibilities to find ways and means to overcome the present stalemate and I can only hope that all these efforts may be helpful in finding a formula which could serve as a basis for a solution.

The past year has been highly frustrating as far as efforts to find a solution to the Cyprus problem are concerned. Despite numerous efforts and contacts, it has not been possible to find an agreed basis for a meaningful resumption of the intercommunal talks, and the situation in the island has not improved, although, owing in large measure to the United Nations Peace-keeping Force, it has remained peaceful.

In the absence of any immediate prospect of moving towards a comprehensive solution, I have suggested that the parties might at least wish to tackle certain limited practical problems such as Varosha or the reopening of Nicosia International Airport in the hope that a limited success might facilitate the climate for broader negotiations. Some new proposals on Varosha have in fact been put forward, and I and my representatives will continue to try to find ways of making at least some practical advances on this and other aspects of the island's problems, pending a resumption of the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement.

Cyprus is a problem which ought to be soluble by peaceful negotiation. Until it is solved it remains not only a threat to stability and good relations in the eastern Mediterranean, but also a continuing and heavy burden on the resources of the United Nations. I sincerely hope therefore that we shall see, in the near future, the necessary changes in attitude to allow for progress towards a negotiated solution.

Most of the above problems involve in different ways questions of security, withdrawal of forces, guarantees for the future and the interests, hopes and apprehensions of many groups. In many of them the United Nations plays, or is expected to play, the role of an honest broker, as the guarantor of internationally acceptable behaviour on all sides and the protector and keeper of the peace. In Cyprus and the Middle East especially it is charged with the function of maintaining quiet and a reasonable degree of normality while a long-term settlement is sought. The new United Nations responsibilities in southern Lebanon challenge the capacity of the Organization to inspire confidence and promote peaceful solutions. I shall therefore deal in more detail with some aspects of this new operation.

IV

The setting up of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in March confronted the United Nations with particularly delicate and complex responsibilities. The main elements of the new Force's mandate were to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, to establish the peaceful nature of its area of operations and to ensure that it was not used for hostile acts of any kind, and to make the utmost effort to facilitate the restoration of the authority and sovereignty of the Government of Lebanon in the area. Under this rather generally worded mandate, the Force was called upon to deal with a wide variety of groups, some heavily armed, of conflicting interests, and of needs for assistance of various kinds. The performance of these tasks required careful interpretation by the Secretary-General and skilful handling by the commanders in the field.

Mistakes in such a delicate mission are likely to create very serious difficulties for the Organization as well as for the Force itself. Unlike the other peace-keeping operations in the Middle East, UNIFIL is operating without a precise agreement between the opposing parties and in an area where for some years there has been little or no exercise of legitimate civil authority by the Government of Lebanon. The over-all situation in Lebanon also creates very considerable obstacles to the full implementation of the mandate.

The performance of UNIFIL is important in a wider sphere than southern Lebanon or even the Middle East. The Force is a test of the capacity of the United Nations to act with objectivity, impartiality and effectiveness in a highly complex and violent situation. It is also a test of the Organization's capacity to gain the co-operation of all the parties to a conflict situation.

I wish, first of all, to pay tribute to the Security Council and all of its members for the speed with which it was possible to decide upon the terms of the mandate of this operation and for their co-operation with the Secretary-General in carrying out that mandate. I have been conscious throughout this very difficult exercise of the support and understanding of the members of the Council and of their willingness, collectively and individually, to help in any way they could to make our task less difficult. We have also been fortunate that a number of countries were prepared to send contingents for this unpredictable and sometimes dangerous task.

To my regret there have been a few tragic incidents and some fatal casualties, but the officers and men of the Force have shown a remarkable capacity to understand the problem and to peform their difficult functions in such a way as to gain the confidence and respect of those with whom they have to deal. It is difficult to describe, unless one has experienced it directly, the mixture of restraint, firmness, understanding, patience, persuasion and military discipline which is required to make such a complex operation successful. It is impossible to foretell what the future will hold, but I hope that the necessary co-operation will be forthcoming from all parties to enable UNIFIL to exercise effectively its function and bring its mission to a successful conclusion.

In this regard, the early restoration of the sovereignty and authority of the Government of Lebanon is the key to, and the ultimate aim of, all our efforts. At the beginning of the UNIFIL operation, attention was especially focused on the withdrawal of Israeli forces and on the Force's relations with the Palestinian and other groups in and around its area of operations. The latter question was tackled at once through our contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and a mutually satisfactory arrangement was reached. By mid-June the Israeli forces had also withdrawn from the UNIFIL area of operations.

However, the achievement of the final and most important stage of UNIFIL's mandate, the restoration of the authority and sovereignty of Lebanon in the entire area, has until now, most regrettably, been frustrated. I have reported fully to the Security Council on this problem. Here I only wish to mention the general problem which faces the United Nations in dealing, within the territory of a sovereign country, with indigenous, rebellious armed groups supported from outside. Peace-keeping forces are restricted in their

right to use force to the category of self-defence in the last resort. The strength of a peace-keeping force lies not in its arms but in its peaceful and disciplined approach and in the political consensus which lies behind it. To resort to force is the last and least desirable course for a peace-keeping force. Negotiation and persuasion must be the primary method for achieving its objectives. However, if such methods prove unavailing, the Security Council may well have to consider what other approaches are open to it under the Charter.

I hope that this stage will not be reached in southern Lebanon, and that all concerned will be persuaded that their best interests lie in the restored authority and effectiveness of the Government of Lebanon and in co-operation with peace-keeping forces of the United Nations in fulfilment of the decisions of the Security Council.

There are at present about 12,700 officers and men from 27 nations involved in six separate United Nations peace-keeping operations and there may shortly be more. The technique of peace-keeping is one of the real innovations of the United Nations. It is a complex and unconventional procedure in which military personnel are used for purposes to which they are not normally accustomed. It is essentially an enterprise based on voluntary co-operation, restraint and a mutual interest in restoring peace and normality. I hope very much that Governments of Member States will be encouraged to continue their efforts to improve the capacity of the United Nations for peace-keeping, to develop the technique so that it is more applicable in other conflict situations, and to provide the Organization with the necessary arrangements, assistance and support to make its peace-keeping operations less improvised and more efficient.

V

Throughout the world Governments and peoples are increasingly plagued by wanton violence of one sort or another, much of which can only be classified as criminal terrorism originated for anarchic or criminal purposes. It is now clear that we have come to a point when the world at large feels obliged to take note of the escalation of violence and to do something about it. This development was evident at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly when the hijacking of a civilian airliner was followed by the demand of the International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations for urgent preventive action by the United Nations. Hijacking thus became a major and unexpected issue on the agenda of the thirty-second session. Although the Assembly took quick action in this crisis, the resolution adopted was essentially admonitory in nature. It urged all States to accede to the anti-hijacking instruments which already existed and to follow strict preventive procedures on a national basis. The wide concern over hijacking did not result in notable progress in the drafting of an international convention against the taking of hostages, although the Assembly agreed to extend for another year the mandate of the Committee established for this purpose. It is also noteworthy that there is a growing consensus in all sectors of opinion that hijacking of civilian aircraft is in no circumstances justified.

During the past year a series of tragic events has underlined the fact that the incidence of irresponsible and violent acts has not abated. The security precautions now considered indispensable throughout the world are only one sign of how far we have come from the calm and confidence of earlier times. This is a matter which concerns all Governments and all peoples, for none is immune from the kind of actions which have afflicted several Member States in the past year.

I believe that the States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to discuss these problems in all frankness with each other and to try to find means by which they can assist each other in facing a peril which threatens all. In fact there have been encouraging instances of such practical international co-operation in the past year. If this trend is not strengthened, there is a serious danger that the escalation of violence, taking advantage of the technological peculiarities which increasingly dominate our lives, will threaten the already precarious fabric of international life in the same way that it has threatened the social and political fabric of some Member States in the past year.

I do not underestimate the difficulties of facing up to this problem, but I believe that, if we intend to improve the quality of life on our planet, this is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored.

VI

The tenth special session of the General Assembly was the largest and most representative meeting ever convened to consider the problem of disarmament. During its extensive, world-wide discussion of disarmament that historic gathering, attended by many Heads of State or Government, unfolded a new and widely welcomed approach to the question of disarmament.

I do not need to restate the unprecedented challenge to human survival represented by the present incredible diversity and quantity of armaments of all kinds. As I pointed out in my report last year, it has become increasingly clear that the approach followed since the Second World War is wholly inadequate to stem the tide of an innovating arms race, where technological ingenuity tends constantly to outstrip the pace of negotiations. This trend would be even more difficult to overcome in circumstances of increased international tension and if Governments were not able to resist the urge to seek more security through more sophisticated armaments. It is clear that the disarmament problem has become so complex that it has to be dealt with within a comprehensive framework. One of the achievements of the special session was the construction of such a framework and the agreement on basic principles and priorities. In the process there was a thorough discussion of all major aspects of disarmament, during which new elements for study and negotiation were introduced and a larger area of consensus emerged.

It was not the purpose of the tenth special session to conclude new disarmament or arms limitation agreements. The objective was rather to tackle one of the most elusive problems of our time: how to disarm. The Final Document, in its comprehensiveness, provides us with the machinery which, given the necessary political will and technical knowledge, could well provide the answer to that problem. It contains the foundations of an international disarmament strategy for all disarmament efforts in the coming years. It includes a review and assessment of the existing situation, outlines objectives and priorities and sets forth fundamental principles for disarmament negotiations. It reflects agreement on the need for a series of specific disarmament measures, as well as for the preparation of a comprehensive disarmament programme. It also

sets up international machinery designed to deal with disarmament in its various aspects. It further expresses the view that at the earliest appropriate time a world disarmament conference should be convened with universal participation and with adequate preparation. The fact that the Final Document was adopted by consensus enhances its significance and ensures a solid ground for future disarmament efforts.

I was gratified to note the active participation of Member States in the work of the special session. Medium and small Powers, whose involvement is absolutely essential for the success of a new approach to disarmament, were deeply involved in the preparation of the Final Document. The special responsibility of the militarily significant States in any process of disarmament has been stressed many times. They too contributed to the success of the special session and, in this regard, the important part played by the five nuclear-weapon States and permanent members of the Security Council in submitting their own views and suggestions is a noteworthy development.

The Final Document gives full recognition to the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, a question of particular relevance for the new approach outlined at the special session. No other forum can fulfil the requirement of universal involvement that the present situation demands. In this sense, the establishment of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, as well as the new terms of reference given to the First Committee, will secure the widest possible participation of all in the search for general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Universal participation in deliberative bodies would be meaningless without an appropriate negotiating forum. One of the outstanding achievements of the special session has been the balance accomplished between the deliberative and negotiating machinery, with adequate procedures to ensure that the output from each of those levels would be properly channelled into the other. The Committee on Disarmament, to be convened at Geneva not later than January 1979, reflects the need for a multilateral negotiating forum which will take its decisions on the basis of consensus. If, as the General Assembly has recognized, disarmament is a matter of vital interest to all the peoples of the world, consensus should be the way to proceed, with perseverance and dedication, in the negotiation of meaningful agreements. No less significant is the importance attached by the Assembly to the participation of all the nuclear-weapon States in the negotiating body.

Machinery cannot be effective by itself. In this respect, I feel encouraged by the adoption at the special session of a programme of action on disarmament containing priorities and measures that States should undertake as a matter of urgency, while at the same time providing for the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. In addition to the Programme of Action, a number of proposals were submitted to the special session which may deserve to be studied further. Some of these were listed in the Final Document.

The success of the special session should not be a reason for complacency. It marks not the end but rather the beginning of a new phase of the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We have an international disarmament strategy. We must now implement it with the utmost dedication and energy. By the time the next special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is held, we should be able to show to the world that the race for survival has gained an irreversible lead over the arms race.

There has also been progress in the direct involvement of peoples in the disarmament process. The non-governmental organizations made a remarkable contribution to the special session, which greatly stimulated the debate and enriched the exchange of ideas. The special session emphasized the further mobilization of world public opinion. I am confident that non-governmental organizations and research institutions will continue to lend us their valuable assistance.

If a comprehensive approach is to be successful, it should encompass not only the deliberative and negotiating levels, but also supporting activities, such as research, study and information. The decision to strengthen the United Nations Centre for Disarmament and to extend its research and information functions reflects the recognition given at the special session to those activities, which are integral aspects of international co-operation on disarmament. I am gratified by the endorsement accorded at the special session to my proposal for the establishment of an advisory board of eminent persons, to advise me on various aspects of studies to be made under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and arms limitation, including a programme of such studies. The board, which I expect to convene shortly, should develop a programme of studies responsive to the requirements imposed by the programme of action on disarmament.

When the special session completed its work, I said that one of its great achievements had been the construction of a comprehensive framework. This is a major step forward, but a first step. We must now get on with practical measures in this field in the interests of world peace and security, and of economic progress and development, and of human rights and social justice.

VII

Despite the many difficulties encountered this year, the negotiations taking place in the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea have produced important advances towards agreement on several key questions. Among the issues appearing to be solved are some of those deemed the most difficult and intractable when the Conference started meeting almost five years ago. The difficulties which remain are, no doubt, serious and must be expected to take yet more time to settle satisfactorily. Those with which the Conference is presently dealing include the system of exploitation of the international sea-bed area and the powers and functions of the proposed authority, the outer limit of national jurisdiction over the continental shelf as well as delimitation of maritime areas and settlement of disputes thereon. However, it now seems likely that, with goodwill and a commitment to achieve mutual accommodation, the long-sought convention can be produced.

Although the last stages of a negotiating process—particularly one bearing so directly on relations between developing and developed countries—are apt to give rise to new anxieties, the progress already achieved and the efforts made have been too great for the international community to miss the opportunity to obtain a negotiated and viable convention. The pro-

gress made by the Conference is clearly due to the emphasis placed from its inception on the understanding that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole and that a new convention on the law of the sea must secure the widest possible acceptance. Any other result would leave the international community facing new and dangerous problems.

VIII

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is fitting that in this commemorative year we rededicate ourselves to the attainment of the fundamental freedoms set forth in the Charter and in the Universal Declaration and that we reassess the progress being made in carrying out our collective and individual obligations. In this context, it would likewise be fitting for Member States to review their legislation and practices in order to ensure that the standards and goals of the Declaration are reflected in the daily work of government.

The promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights is a basic tenet of the Charter. In its Preamble, the Charter reaffirms "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". There is growing acceptance of the principle implicit in this pledge and in the Universal Declaration that recognition and promotion of the worth and dignity of every human being is a legitimate concern of the world community.

In the last 30 years, a comprehensive series of conventions, declarations and recommendations regarding human rights has developed under the guidance of the United Nations system. A milestone in this process was the entry into force in 1976 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, with its Optional Protocol. The Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, has moved swiftly to pursue its mandate to review the progress achieved and problems encountered in this regard by States legally bound by the Covenant. The Optional Protocol also permits the Human Rights Committee to consider communications from individuals alleging human rights violations. At this time, 51 Member States have ratified the Covenant and 20 have accepted to be bound by the Optional Protocol. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified to date by 52 Member States, has provided for a system of periodic reporting by States parties on measures being taken to fulfil the goals of that Covenant. One of the most effective ways in which substantial additional progress can be achieved lies in a more universal adherence to these Covenants and other human rights instruments by those States which have not yet done so and in a renewed commitment on the part of those which have.

Despite the political constraints often inherent in the existing intergovernmental machinery, we have witnessed over the past year a distinct improvement in co-operative efforts of Member States to deal with alleged violations of human rights. This trend has particularly manifested itself in the work of the Commission on Human Rights under the confidential procedures established by the Economic and Social Council for the investigation of situations which appear to reveal a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights. In this connexion, the Commission at present is actively considering the human rights situation in a number of countries.

This past July, the Government of Chile admitted into the country the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Situation of Human Rights in Chile. Its report, based for the first time on an on-the-spot investigation, will be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session. This visit represents a positive development towards acceptance of the principle that the broader obligations of Member States for the promotion and protection of human rights are not incompatible with that of domestic jurisdiction.

My own direct efforts in the field—the exercise of my good offices in specific humanitarian cases—have met with some success. To secure the maximum benefit for the individuals involved, past experience has demonstrated that it is best to proceed on purely humanitarian grounds, and usually with the utmost confidentiality. Not only does this approach work to the advantage of the victims, but it also avoids the political sensitivity often associated with such cases. I shall continue these efforts whenever and wherever they best serve the welfare of the individuals concerned.

In another facet of United Nations human rights activity, we have reached the mid-point of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, which involves a broad-gauged and complex programme to focus governmental and public attention on this important subject. In this context I urge all Member States to work towards the eradication of this evil phenomenon and the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Our efforts in the field of human rights ultimately depend upon the commitment, political will and co-operation of all Member States. Without that support, the Organization will be unable to meet the many challenges before us; with it there is very real promise of progress in the direction of the Charter's goal of better standards of life in larger freedom.

IX

In the past year, although the North-South dialogue has continued in various forums, the results have been neither commensurate with the rate of activity nor, for that matter, with the gravity of the issues involved.

The dangerous trends I noted last year have not abated. Most developing countries continue to suffer from the adverse effects of fluctuations in commodity prices, aggravated by uncertainty resulting from continuing exchange rate instability. The failure of developed countries to achieve sustained economic recovery has resulted in reduced demand for many raw materials exports of developing countries while the inadequate level of financial transfers and the continuing inflation in prices of the manufactured exports from developed countries have put intense pressure on the balance-of-payments position of a large number of developing countries. As a result, many developing countries have been forced to increase their external indebtedness while others, particularly the poorer countries, have had to curtail their development programmes. It is now clear that developing countries will not be able to reach the six per cent growth target of the international development strategy for the 1970s. At the same time, economic recession and continuing inflation have been associated with growing payments disequilibrium among major developed countries and a disturbing trend towards protectionism.

The creation of the Committee Established under General Assembly Resolution 32/174 must be looked at in this perspective. A consensus seemed to have emerged in the Committee on the seriousness of the problems confronting the world economy and more particularly developing countries. Because of its unique character and composition, the very fact of the Committee's existence awakened high hopes in the international community. I am deeply concerned that the Committee, despite strenuous efforts, was unable to agree on how to interpret its mandate.

One positive aspect emerging from current negotiations on development issues is the increasing recognition of the interdependence that links all economies. This recognition could significantly contribute to the new international economic order if it leads to a wider acceptance of the need for structural adjustments in the short-, medium- and long-term by all economies. It should not obscure the need for means to correct the large imbalances and considerable inequalities which remain among nations or the old and new forms of dependence that continue to exist. That being said, there is now an increasing awareness that the current problems are a reflection of underlying structural disequilibrium in the world economy and that a solution cannot be sought merely by a return of the industrialized countries to past patterns of growth. These problems call for more basic changes of a structural and institutional character. Such changes will need to be considered, negotiated and promoted on the basis of the essential objectives of a new international economic order.

It is already apparent that the special session of 1980 will provide the opportunity for significant decisions. It will signal the start of a new decade of concerted effort to move closer to a resolution of those world economic problems with which the international community has grappled with scant success for the last two decades. Dare we enter the new decade no nearer to a resolution of those fundamental issues than we are today? If we do so, it will certainly be at our peril. The special session will provide a timely opportunity to effect a synthesis of policies based, in part, on the outcome of the major world conferences of recent years as well as those planned to take place in the period immediately preceding it. The most strenuous intellectual effort will be required to ensure the success of the special session. These preparations make it all the more urgent that the negotiations on North-South issues move forward.

It is in this wider context that the restructuring measures of the General Assembly must be viewed. Restructuring is simply a device, albeit a crucial one, to facilitate at the institutional level the general movement towards the establishment of a new international economic order. It is no substitute for political will, which is ultimately the only guarantee of substantive results rather than merely procedural or mechanistic ones. Member States have made it clear that restructuring is an ongoing activity and that the decisions taken to date are only a first step. The considerations which prompted the restructuring exercise should now lead to a continuing commitment to, and process of, change and reform.

I am very much aware that we must provide substantive and other support services of the highest quality in order to meet the expectations of Member States. In this connexion I particularly welcome the assistance that I am already receiving from the newly appointed Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. I wish to assure Member States that we are already giving serious thought to the contribution we can make to the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1980.

X

It is a commonplace of diplomatic conversation that the international agenda is impossibly crowded, but while we complain, nobody does very much about it. It is time, I believe, for us all to face this problem squarely in the interests of the effectiveness of the process of international co-operation as well as of rationality and health. This is one of those areas where it is easy to point out the difficulties but extremely hard to find the remedy. However, I make no excuse for reverting to it once again.

The roots and causes of this problem are many and various. In the first place the world is far more complex than it used to be. It is more conscious of its problems, which are complicated beyond the dreams of previous generations. There are more sovereign States, more organizations, more preoccupations and, above all, a far wider awareness of what we are up against and what we might be able to do about it.

While trying to face up in a responsible manner to these new conditions, we have, I believe, tended to use work patterns and procedures from the past which are not always best suited to our present problems. We have tried to face the age of the computer, the supersonic aircraft and instant communication with the procedures of the last century. We seem to be wedded to the proposition that if there is a problem there should be a conference, and if there is a conference there will be documents, lengthy speeches and a plan of action, and after that, as night follows day, there will be an organization with a secretariat, which in turn will organize another follow-up conference, and so on.

There are also a growing number of interconnected international or intergovernmental groupings which add a large quota of high-level meetings to the calendar, while in the United Nations the General Assembly meets increasingly often in special session.

This praiseworthy effort to meet our responsibilities has had a number of results. It has meant that leaders and high officials spend an increasing amount of time and energy in attending meetings of a global, regional or specialized nature. The swiftness of contemporary travel, far from diminishing this burden, has rather increased it, since it is now possible to attend far more international meetings in a year than it used to be. Once having arrived by jet aircraft, however, the procedures adopted are much the same as they were in 1919. We have the same programme of formal debates, where prepared statements are read, often to a far from expectant audience. We have committee work, further plenary meetings, the adoption of various forms of international instruments and, of course, social occasions. This is accompanied by an enormous outpouring of documentation in the required languages and a great deal of effort all round. There is often a lack of spontaneity and expectancy, which is not only depressing for the participants but communicates itself to the public at large.

I have to say frankly that, having observed this process as Secretary-General for almost seven years, I am disturbed at its effects. The subject-matter of the agenda for the United Nations could hardly be more interesting or important, but we have too many gatherings, conferences and sessions of one sort or another. The result is that fewer and fewer people lis-

ten to the speeches, even among the representatives of Governments, let alone the press or the public. One glance at the press or public galleries in some of the meetings of the United Nations tells the story all too plainly. There is widespread criticism that we are long on oratory and documentation, but short on performance, spontaneous debate and practical action.

Let me say at once that I have no doubt whatsoever of the importance and relevance of the manifold activities of the United Nations or of the sincerity with which Governments pursue them. What disturbs me is that our procedures may have the effect of overloading the absorptive capacity of Governments, numbing public interest in vital subjects and substituting formal and, sometimes, rhetorical exchanges for action. If international institutions are to increase in influence and in effectiveness and if they are to be taken seriously by the public at large, this is a problem which we must face with the same seriousness that we face political and economic problems. I do not believe that any national representatives or members of Governments who have taken part in the exhausting international agenda of the last year or two would disagree with me that, while our motives are beyond reproach, our ways of going about things are urgently in need of serious review.

I know from experience that this is much easier said than done. To make any inroads on the problem, which is one of political symbolism as well as of procedure and bureaucracy, we shall require a self-denying ordinance which will be agreed, shared and adhered to by all. We shall require the capacity to find new procedures to match the speed, diversity and sheer complexity of modern life. We shall require to make better use of modern expertise and modern techniques. We must make our Organization up to date and competitive with the very real problems which it faces on behalf of humanity.

I have the greatest respect for the dedication, hard work and ability of the representatives of Member States in the United Nations. I am anxious however that their efforts should bear the maximum harvest in terms of results. I am also anxious that the public at large should understand more clearly what it is we do here, how important are the problems we tackle and how valid the motives which drive us to do it. I would welcome the suggestions of Member States on this problem, for I believe that it is time that we undertook an intensive, informal discussion of ways and means of bringing our Organization procedurally into a more constructive relationship with the pressing realities of modern life.

We might do well to start with an effort to improve and streamline the workings of the General Assembly. The Assembly has grown in the last three decades from a body of 50 members with an agenda of some 20 items to a gathering of nearly 150 members with an agenda of some 130 items. It is a tribute to the members that the regular sessions have remained the same length in spite of the tripling of the membership. I believe, however, that it would be a very healthy development if the agenda of the Assembly could be reviewed and some items of lesser priority removed from it.

There are other ways in which we could enhance the effectiveness and the impact of the General Assembly's work. It would, I believe, be wise to apply strictly the original idea that items only come to the plenary for final disposition after a full discussion in committee. The practice of arbitrarily selecting certain items for discussion in plenary meeting is likely to result in both duplication and loss of impact and to confuse the Assembly's pattern of work.

XI

The concept of international civil service is at the heart of the problem of building an effective system of world order. The international civil service should be the objective executor of the decisions of intergovernmental bodies. It should be the point at which expertise, common sense, objective judgement and moderating influence converge. It should provide the common ground where Governments can begin to harmonize their conflicting viewpoints. It should play a key role in the effort to find a working balance between national sovereignty and interest and international responsibility.

In a world of competitive sovereign States this is indeed an ambitious concept, but I firmly believe that much of our success in the future will depend on our ability to develop a truly international civil service with the highest standards of integrity and performance. The fact that the United Nations is a highly political organization both underlines the necessity of an impartial international civil service and makes its achievement more complicated. None the less, I believe we are making progress in this very difficult task.

As in so much of the activity of the United Nations, the first indispensable prerequisite of progress is the support and understanding of Member States. I believe that Governments are increasingly ready to recognize that an objective and reliable Secretariat is in the long-term interest of all the Members. It is also now better understood that, while objectivity and impartiality may not always be popular in the heat of a crisis, they are a guarantee and an asset to be respected and protected. To maintain such an attitude, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat must frequently resist pressures from many quarters, and it is on this resistance to pressure that their long-term credibility and usefulness to the membership as a whole depends.

For its part, the Secretariat must at all times keep a watch on its conduct with the greatest care. It must be aware of the difficulties and pressures under which Governments themselves are operating and do whatever it can to facilitate the actions of Governments in support of the decisions of the main organs of the United Nations.

It goes without saying that the Secretariat must operate within the framework of the decisions of the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations, while not losing its capacity to implement these decisions in a practical and objective way. Given the rather general nature and wording of some of these decisions, especially on controversial matters, this is not always easy, but here again I believe we have made progress. The working relationship, for example, between the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, especially on some very difficult problems of peace-making and peace-keeping, seems to me to have developed along these lines in a most encouraging manner. I wish here to express my appreciation to the members of the Council for their support and understanding in dealing practically with some of the complex and controversial problems with which we have recently been faced.

Another essential prerequisite of building an effective international civil service is the availability of men and women of high quality recruited on a broadly rep-

resentative geographical basis for service in the Secretariat. The difficulties which we have encountered in this endeavour have been set out in detail in other documents. I believe that we are making progress, but that it is slow and sometimes hesitating. I am especially concerned at our difficulties in bringing women at suitably senior levels into the Secretariat. A main problem here is the shortage of suitable and available women candidates.

I am also naturally concerned about the risks of inflation, imbalance, dead wood and redundancy which are common to all bureaucracies, including international ones. This problem is linked to the particular difficulty of projecting the notion of a well-structured and mobile career service onto international organization, where it is far more difficult to construct a satisfactory and effective career system than in a national administration.

If the end result desired is to have the services of a well-structured and mobile career service, whose standards of performance can be relied upon, far more attention must be paid to identifying what currently inhibits our productivity, what conditions make difficult the maintenance of high standards and, on a more positive note, what are the ingredients of a career development that would give satisfaction to the individual staff member while serving well the interests of the Organization. While a good deal is known about career systems in individual national administrations, we know far less about how to construct a cohesive career system of quality and integrity in international organizations. We will be defeating our best efforts in recruitment if we do not give this problem due attention.

This brings me to the question of career service versus secondment from Governments. I think the United Nations Secretariat requires a balance between both of these elements if it is to be effective and to remain in active contact with the realities of international affairs. I also believe, however, that a permanent career international civil service, as foreseen in the Charter, is an essential foundation for the effective operation, development and continuity of the Secretariat. If this foundation were to disappear, there would be a danger that the Secretariat would become simply a continuation in international form of the foreign services of the Members. In such a case it would cease to function as the central co-ordinating point in international affairs which I tried to describe at the opening of this section.

I fully realize how much importance Governments attach to being represented adequately in the Secretariat. Indeed, this is a welcome recognition of their positive attitude to the work of the Organization. On the other hand, I must say that I am increasingly concerned at the mounting pressures from all sides to secure jobs, especially at senior levels in the Secretariat. The top level of posts, Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General, are certainly to be regarded to some extent as political appointments in which Member States have a legitimate interest. At lower levels, however, the intergovernmental competition for posts is tending to become a severe impediment to the balanced and effective development of the Secretariat. I appeal to all Member States to exercise great restraint in this matter in the interests of building an effective, balanced and representative international Secretariat, which will in the long run best serve the interests of all the Members. The task of building an efficient and active international civil service will otherwise be seriously hampered. No civil service can hope long to survive if it fails to compensate adequately, through reasonable career prospects, those of its staff who have served it for long periods conscientiously and with dedication.

XII

The work of the United Nations runs on two main and parallel lines. One is an attempt to deal, through international co-operation, with the immense actual problems of a world in a state of fundamental change and development. But parallel with this process runs the other purpose, that of gradually replacing the haphazard relationships and developments of a world beset by tensions and conflicts with the working institutions, the consistent conduct of affairs and the spirit of solidarity of a world order based on a sense of community.

The fact that every year the United Nations is asked to tackle new problems is evidence of the growing feeling that international co-operation and the multilateral approach are in many cases the best, and sometimes the only, way to come to grips with pressing global concerns. This is a positive development which is progressively testing and stretching the capacity of the Organization for effective action.

The formulation of objectives or plans of action is an essential first step in the construction of any institution. The development of an institutional framework capable of giving effect to such international objectives or plans is inevitably a far longer process. It is a matter not only of agreeing on courses of action, building institutions, developing working methods and evolving a skilled and responsible international civil service; it is also a question of reorienting the attitudes of Governments and many other institutions from the old predominantly national approach to the new approach where international institutions are both respected and consistently used for the practical purposes of an accepted world order. This will take time, effort and above all a general belief that such a transition not only serves the long-term interest of all Governments but is essential to a reasonably secure and civilized future for the human race.

At the present stage, while wide-ranging principles and objectives have been defined and various over-all plans of action have been agreed, resort to the United Nations for consistent practical action is the exception rather than the rule. Especially in the political field, practical action is usually required of the Organization only when other approaches have failed and the situation is in an advanced state of deterioration. This often gives to United Nations action a last resort and improvised character which neither does justice to the Organization's position in the world nor demonstrates the confidence which Governments should display in the effectiveness and capacity of their own institution for maintaining international peace and security.

I hope very much that the wider responsibilities that the United Nations has taken on this year, to which I have referred earlier, may mark a change in the general attitude and a growing belief that the United Nations offers, in an imperfect world, the best approach to many vital problems.

I also hope that, if Governments are increasingly inclined to entrust the United Nations with important problems, they will also be increasingly prepared to support the work of the Organization not only in words but with political support directed towards the achievement of its tasks. Nor is political support enough. The United Nations must dispose of at least

the minimum practical means to perform its functions. There is at present often a large disparity between the means deemed adequate for national aims and those available for international enterprises. Obviously the United Nations as an Organization must exercise the maximum economy and care in its use of the funds and resources put at its disposal by Governments. But by the same token the Organization should not be asked to take on essential tasks without the assurance of adequate support.

I have no doubt that the forthcoming year will be an eventful, even a fateful, one. New challenges will emerge, new tests will have to be met and some old problems may well reach a critical stage. In the circumstances neither optimism nor pessimism is in order. Rather we should view situations realistically in the knowledge that we have already made considerable progress in international organization and that, if the will is there, existing institutions and instrumentalities could do much to make our world more secure and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all its people.

All around we hear talk of frustration and despair, echoed throughout the world by the media. Every now and then, however, we receive striking proof of the validity of the Charter concept of international order and of the necessity and usefulness—sometimes in the darkest hours—of the United Nations. It is on these positive developments that we should strive to build the future order, which will also be the future United Nations.

Kurt WALDHEIM
Secretary-General