



General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting

Thursday, 26 September 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail (Malaysia)

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

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I would like to begin by extending to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. We are certain that your long experience, outstanding ability and diplomatic skill will guide us successfully in our work at this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Allow me also to thank your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his untiring efforts during the previous session.

At last year's session, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we reflected on the birth of the United Nations, assessed its development and influence on international relations to date, paid tribute to its achievements and identified some of its difficulties. At

the same time, we acknowledged that our main responsibility for the future of the Organization is to insure that it has the ability to address most effectively the agenda of the twenty-first century.

In the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, we agreed that

"In order to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of the future and the expectations of the United Nations held by peoples around the world, it is essential that the United Nations itself be reformed and modernized." (*resolution 50/6, para. 14*)

Now, as we begin the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, we should take stock of what we have been able to accomplish and redirect our efforts to what remains to be achieved.

In 1996, we have continued our work towards the institutional and financial reforms needed to make the United Nations a more productive and dynamic institution so that it will be better able to perform its key functions and fulfil its mandates more effectively. In this regard, the fundamental priority must be to ensure that the financing of our Organization is placed on a firm and lasting base.

May I recall in this context that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus is voluntarily contributing one third of the total cost of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus and, in addition, has increased by one

after 22 years of negotiations that have yielded no results on the main issues of the problem, to embark on another round of fruitless talks. On the one hand, they destroy the credibility of the negotiating process, and on the other, they keep the attention of the international community focused on the intercommunal constitutional aspect of the problem, thus overshadowing the real issue — the invasion and continued occupation, for 22 years, of substantial territory of the Republic of Cyprus by the Turkish forces.

We, for our part, will continue to do everything in our power to help the Secretary-General of our Organization to succeed in his renewed efforts, through his newly appointed Special Representative, in the search for a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem.

At the same time the Government of the Republic of Cyprus will pursue its application for membership in the European Union, because such membership will have benefits for both communities. While we hope to keep accession negotiations to the timetable already foreseen, we earnestly desire to reach a solution to our problem before accession.

At the beginning of my statement, I spoke of the need to reform and strengthen our Organization. From this rostrum, I have repeatedly underlined the importance of honouring the commitments we enter into and of implementing the decisions we take. I have stressed how essential it is to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and to hold to full account those who violate them.

The question of Cyprus continues to be such a case of accountability, due to the refusal of Turkey to implement solemn Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for, among other things, the respect of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the return of the refugees to their homes and lands, the respect of the demographic composition of the Republic and the restoration of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Cyprus. In fact, not only has Turkey not implemented these resolutions, but it has grossly violated them. Even the immense humanitarian problem of the missing persons remains unresolved, perpetuating the tragedy of their relatives. All efforts should therefore be exerted by the Security Council, and by all those in a position to do so, to bring about a real change in Turkey's attitude.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has highlighted the need to maintain and reinforce our faith and

that of future generations in our Organization. Implementation of United Nations decisions will go a long way towards achieving this lofty goal.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Dini.

Mr. Dini (Italy): On behalf of Italy, I am pleased to express to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. Your extensive and widely recognized knowledge and experience of the activities and functions of the United Nations is the best guarantee of your success. At the same time, allow me to sincerely thank your predecessor, Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, who so ably led the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

In addition, I should like to express our great appreciation for the inspiring role and constructive leadership of the United Nations provided by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali.

Italy shares and fully supports the statement made before the General Assembly on Tuesday by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. At the special commemorative meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there was a solemn reaffirmation of the need for the United Nations to implement significant changes to keep step with the new global realities. Italy believes that the time has come to translate ideas into urgently needed reforms. Let me briefly address them.

The General Assembly is the most representative expression of the values of our Organization. Therefore, we believe that the General Assembly must increasingly reflect the opinions of our peoples and become more democratic through direct links to the institutional realities

of its Member States. The Italian delegation to the General Assembly, for example, includes representatives of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of our Parliament, which helps our political forces to have a fuller appreciation for the role and activities of the United Nations. We hope that this practice, which is also followed by certain other countries, becomes more widespread and consolidated.

The General Assembly's subsidiary bodies should be simplified, merging some committees while streamlining the agenda. Greater transparency is needed in relations between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat.

At the same time, we believe that the Secretariat should be restructured, so as to organize resources and functions around two focal points: on the one hand, peace and security; and on the other, democracy and development. In this context, Italy proposes that the three economic and social departments of the United Nations Secretariat should be merged into a single entity under the leadership of a Deputy Secretary-General, who would also act as the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Council.

Italy is actively committed to Security Council reform and has presented a detailed proposal inspired by the fundamental principles of democracy, equitable geographical representation, efficiency and transparency.

Reform should not lead to the establishment of new regimes of privilege, which would diminish rather than increase equitable representation on the Council. Last April, in his address before the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, warned that stressing the elitist nature of the Council

"could widen the gap and thus reduce the interest of the excluded, demeaning their political commitment in the process and perhaps marginalizing them and giving them the dangerous feeling that they are token presences, mere spectators." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 103rd meeting, p. 3-4*)

Our goal instead must be to stimulate a greater involvement of all countries, large and small, through a rotation mechanism.

The Italian proposal would maintain a central role for the General Assembly. In fact, it would be up to the General Assembly to decide, on the basis of objective criteria, which countries could rotate more frequently. It

would be up to the General Assembly to elect these countries, by a two-thirds majority and by secret ballot, in a truly democratic way. And it would be up to the General Assembly periodically to review the countries in question.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has found it difficult to reach a consensus. Italy considers its proposal a balanced way of reconciling the new international realities, namely the emergence of countries with notable political and economic capacities — and I include Italy among them — and the rise in developing countries, a full 132 of which are Member States of the United Nations today. However, we are willing to discuss and adhere to a formula that is not inconsistent with the fundamental principles that govern our own proposal.

A new generation of peace-keeping has begun. From its original role as a force of interposition, peace-keeping has gradually taken on the broader tasks of pacification, support for the process of national reconciliation, and today the protection of populations threatened by inter-ethnic conflicts. Italy believes that in confronting these tasks every Member State should responsibly consider making, and be prepared to make, larger and more qualified military contingents available to the United Nations. Italy is capable of doing its part, as demonstrated in Mozambique and in Bosnia.

To make United Nations actions more effective in this field, Italy proposes the following 10 concrete measures which would be designed to: involve troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process; conduct annual reviews of the mission, mandate, and means of peace-keeping operations; have readily deployable military forces available as soon as Security Council decisions are made; create a reliable and unified command structure for peace-keeping operations; expand logistical support for peace-keeping operations; prioritize training programmes for peace-keeping personnel; improve the financing of peace-keeping operations; fill the gap between peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building; entrust certain peace-keeping operations to regional organizations; and, finally, enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

To go into these points more at length, first of all we are glad that the Security Council, as suggested by Italy and other countries, has made it a regular practice to

hold consultations with troop-contributing countries before adopting decisions on peace-keeping operations. The next step is a formal mechanism that guarantees the participation of troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process. In this connection, Italy will lend its full support to the proposal put forward by the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Brundtland, for an annual seminar to focus on the three M's of peace-keeping: Mission, Mandate and Means.

The United Nations must be ready to deal with conflicts where and when they break out, and to this end, it must be able to count on readily available military forces, as provided for by Article 43 of the Charter of the United Nations. We would also support the establishment, as suggested by Canada, of a headquarters module for peace-keeping at the United Nations Secretariat, whose composition should respect the principle of equitable geographical representation.

Italy intends to promote specific proposals to expand logistical support, on the strength of its experience with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the Implementation Force (IFOR). Already, we have made available the first United Nations logistic base in Brindisi, which should be further expanded to ensure efficient resource management for peace-keeping operations and we suggest a separate allocation in peace-keeping budgets for the creation of logistic bases.

The training of peace-keeping personnel is the duty of the United Nations Staff College in Turin, which was created on the Secretary-General's initiative. The College is receiving the maximum support of the Italian Government and will hopefully receive the support of other Member States as well. Financing of peace-keeping operations could be improved through a peace-keeping surcharge for new, frequently rotating Security Council members, as Italy has proposed. This would distribute the burden of the surcharge to a larger number of countries.

Another essential component of peace-keeping is humanitarian assistance during and immediately after a conflict. Between the management of a conflict and post-conflict peace-building there is a gap. To fill just such a gap in Central America, Italy designed and funded the Development Progress for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE) programme, which contributed substantially to the process of reconciliation. A model effort of the same type is now under way in Mozambique.

Closer coordination with regional organizations could help provide the United Nations with the human and material resources it needs. Without detracting from the United Nations central role, certain peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations should be entrusted to regional organizations or coalitions. A good example of this is the success of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in fulfilling the mandate it was given by the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, where the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has also played an increasing and important role.

Italy hopes for growing dialogue between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, and a strengthening of the peace-keeping capabilities of African countries. The OAU must be concretely helped to enhance its mechanism for conflict prevention and crisis management. In line with Italy's traditional support for democratic development, we are planning a broad series of initiatives in Africa aimed at supporting parliamentary activities and strengthening judicial structures and training.

The United Nations is a global system, and it pursues global objectives. Conflict prevention and the promotion of peaceful solutions to controversies cannot be pursued solely at the political and military level. The conditions for peace are found, perhaps primarily, in the economic, social and cultural development of peoples. Poverty, underdevelopment, and cultural isolation disrupt relations between countries and thus constitute threats to international peace.

Through its funds, programmes, and specialized agencies, the United Nations plays a vital role in preventing these obstacles from jeopardizing peaceful coexistence. It helps restore the conditions for orderly global development after disruptions caused by internal and international conflicts. Italy appreciates the importance of both prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and is determined to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations specialized agencies.

With this in mind Italy has chosen the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of the main points of reference for the reconstruction of the city of Mostar. Collaboration with the cultural agency of the United Nations will also prove valuable in other areas of the former Yugoslavia on projects to reconstruct prestigious landmarks such as the Sarajevo library and historic buildings in Ragusa/

Dubrovnik.

The reform process also concerns the economic and social fields of the United Nations. The adoption of resolution 50/227 is a significant step forward, especially where it refers to strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council. Special attention should be paid to the operative follow-up to this resolution.

The identification of priorities by the United Nations, in accordance with changes in international reality, is essential to achieving greater efficiency to serve the best interests of the beneficiary countries, as well as those of the United Nations itself.

During the last five years the United Nations has sponsored a series of global conferences to address systematically the key issues facing humanity today. The upcoming World Food Summit, which will take place in Rome from November 13-17 of this year, will close this important cycle. This summit will provide an opportunity to define new strategic objectives for international action in the field of food security in order to overcome structural shortages, especially in the nutrition sector, in many regions of our planet. In preparation, Italy is promoting a joint development initiative for Angola with the three agricultural agencies whose headquarters are in Rome.

The process of economic globalization and the growing interdependence of markets offer enormous economic and social growth possibilities. From this perspective, the concept of global partnership provides for an equitable sharing of responsibilities. The Ministerial Meeting in Singapore is an excellent opportunity to focus on these issues, consolidating the process of trade liberalization sanctioned by the Uruguay Round and strengthening the regulatory role of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Italy is actively participating in the preparation of the 1997 special session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to the environment. While keeping in mind the results of the Rio Conference and foreseeable future scenarios for sustainable development, that session should update the instruments for action and continue to strive for implementation of Agenda 21. In 1996 significant achievements have been made in the field of disarmament. A major step on the road to nuclear disarmament has of course been taken with the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the field of conventional weapons, an important agreement was reached in Florence last June on arms control in the former Yugoslavia. Our

next goal should be a cut-off in the production of fissile material for military purposes.

The Italian Government pledges to renounce once and for all the production and export of anti-personnel land-mines. We will also initiate the destruction of existing devices and promote further restrictions in the hope that such measures will contribute to reaching a solid international understanding and a definitive ban. To this end, we propose the prompt opening of international negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

The fundamental role of law in the creation of a new world order must be upheld. National sovereignty has nothing to fear from the consolidation of international law. We believe that the cause of peace can only profit from the establishment of an international criminal court on violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity. Italy is committed to this goal and is ready to host a diplomatic conference in 1998 to sanction the birth of such a court. Italy is also promoting a campaign for a worldwide moratorium on the application of the death penalty.

The European Union has constantly emphasized that financial reform is essential to any modernizing of the United Nations structure, and we share the ideas expressed on this subject by the Irish presidency. We are convinced that financial reform is a prerequisite to the United Nations maintaining its crucial function in international relations. The role that United Nations Member States intend to play in pursuing the objectives of the Charter cannot be independent of their specific responsibility to honour their financial obligations. We firmly reiterate the validity of the specific proposal for financial reform presented by the European Union under Italy's presidency during the first half of this year.

A formidable task awaits us: to adapt our Organization to the needs and the challenges of the twenty-first century. Italy is prepared to spare no effort in the pursuit of our common goals.

The President: I now call on His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): It is a very special pleasure for Brunei Darussalam to greet you, Mr. President, as a close friend and neighbour. Please accept our warmest congratulations, both to you