

103. Mr. COLOMBO (Italy):\* Allow me, first of all, Sir, to convey to you, on behalf of the Italian Government and on my own behalf, most sincere congratulations on your election as President of the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We are pleased that this honour has been conferred on the representative of a nation with such great traditions. Your vast experience of the workings of the United Nations is a guarantee of the successful performance of the delicate task entrusted to you.

104. I should also like to express our sincere gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Kittani, who fulfilled the mandate entrusted to him by the General Assembly last year at a particularly challenging time for the Organization with great dedication and skill.

105. The deep appreciation of the Italian Government, and my own appreciation, also go to the new Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, who, in the

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\* Mr. Colombo spoke in Italian. The English text of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

hunger in the world. That meeting showed that there was broad agreement on the most suitable and effective, as well as the most modern, means of action to combat that scourge. The purpose of this initiative launched by Italy at the Ottawa Economic Summit meeting of industrialized countries in July 1981 was to promote a set of joint initiatives while broader discussions would develop in the framework of global negotiations.

118. I would also recall that my country has reached agreement with UNICEF and WHO on a five-year programme, 1982 to 1986, involving \$100 million, that will help to reduce infant mortality in 15 developing countries.

119. I should also like to mention the outline agreement signed in Washington with the World Bank, whereby the Italian Government will make available to that institution—in addition to the regular contributions already made by Italy—a sum of approximately \$400 million in assistance loans and grants over a three-year period.

120. The last specific action, in chronological order, by Italy is the initiative, in collaboration with FAO, to alleviate the food problem in eight countries of the Sahel. Altogether this programme will cost \$500 million, to be provided entirely by my country, over a period of five to seven years.

121. With these initiatives Italy intends to carry out, in the immediate future, an even more organic policy of co-operation, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and programmes, based on a realistic and effective strategy for action that will directly and fully involve the developing countries themselves as partners. South-South relations, in which we see the prospect of concrete and substantial developments in the years to come, should also be encouraged.

122. Italy will continue to provide financial support for the growth of the developing countries with a view to attaining even before the end of the decade the goal of assigning 0.7 per cent of the gross national product to development, in accordance with the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade [resolution 35/56, annex].

123. The creation of a better international order presupposes the commitment of all States—whatever political-institutional pattern they follow, in keeping with their respective needs and traditions—to respect human rights, which represent the highest value that our society is required to protect.

124. These are the beliefs of Italy, a nation that can speak in the name of its ancient traditions as well as its active and highly dedicated present. It has known 3,000 years of history, difficulties, disputes and wars, but in the Mediterranean region, from which I come, in the course of encounters and, admittedly, clashes between different civilizations originating in three great continents, there has been growing consideration for the values of the human being, his rights and his freedom everywhere in the world, and we are proud of that fact.

125. However, it is in this very area of age-old civilization that in the last few weeks human rights have been totally ignored and trampled underfoot. The images of the tragic events in Lebanon are still

vividly and horrifyingly impressed on our minds. Following the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel and the entry of Israeli troops into west Beirut, in flagrant violation of Israel's commitments, there was a tragic increase in violence. In connection with the Sabra and Shatila camps one of the most bitter pages in recent history was written. It revolts the conscience of the world and it arouses feelings of indignation and the strongest condemnation against those directly and indirectly responsible for the slaughter, as well as feelings of pity for the innocent and helpless victims. This is a lesson which should induce everyone to reflect on the inhuman and monstrous consequences which await those who repeatedly take the path of violence.

126. Since in too many areas there is still a disturbing discrepancy between theoretical affirmation of principles and their concrete application in regard to human rights, Italy deems it essential that the United Nations be enabled to have a more direct and incisive impact on the work of verifying effective respect for such principles. The lack of a suitable and prompt response to the intolerable defiance inherent in the persistence, and indeed the spread, of flagrant and serious violations in many countries is highly damaging to the prestige of the United Nations.

127. We certainly do not consider that an organizational adjustment is an adequate response to one of the most serious problems of our time, the solution of which depends on the ever increasing maturity of our common sensitivity and on the courage, never clouded by opportunism, to denounce any violation of human rights.

128. On East-West relations, Italy continues to pursue a firm, responsible policy and is therefore always ready to take part in a constructive dialogue. Détente must be preserved and indeed given a new impetus. Italy is convinced that there is no alternative; therefore, wherever possible, it works with the utmost commitment for the fruitful resumption of the process of détente. Sometimes more recent and very serious events may make us forget or may divert our attention from the events which have most affected the increase in tension between East and West and are decisive elements in the disquieting international situation facing us today.

129. In view of its gravity, the Afghan problem must continue to be a focal point of our debate at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly and for United Nations action in general. Three years have now elapsed since the Soviet invasion, but the resistance of the proud Afghan people to a régime imposed from outside is stronger than ever. The tragic odyssey of those long-suffering people, great numbers of whom have been forced to leave their homeland and seek refuge in neighbouring countries, troubles us profoundly. We have to note with deep regret that there has still been no response to the appeals and the constructive proposals made by the General Assembly, the non-aligned movement, the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the countries of the European Community with a view to the restitution of the right of the Afghan people to self-determination and the re-establishment of that country's traditional status as an independent, neutral and non-aligned State. Therefore we fully support

nine months since he took office, has so completely fulfilled the hopes placed in him. A worthy representative of the illustrious Latin American legal tradition, and particularly the Peruvian school of international law, he has tackled the difficulties which the Organization has had to overcome in this period of his term of office with wisdom, equanimity and, above all, a keen sense of justice. In his search for the road to peace, in his indefatigable championing of negotiated solutions and in his firm defence of the principles of the Charter, the Secretary-General has had and will continue to have the full support of the Italian Government.

106. The international situation during the past year has been growing steadily worse: hotbeds of tension, sometimes turning into violent struggles and wars—with immense losses of human life and acute suffering—have, in fact, constituted threats to the peace and security of the world.

107. The United Nations is all too often faced with serious restraints. Even in its most committed actions, it seems unable to fulfil the expectation that it should not only be the forum of major international debates but also the institution capable of acting effectively to prevent or to extinguish conflicts. This must not discourage us. It is the specific duty of us all—in taking note of this disquieting reality—to analyse in depth, with proper realism, the causes of these limitations, and to give careful but dynamic consideration to the most effective means of enhancing the role of the Organization which, in an international situation characterized by an increase in hotbeds of war, is finding it hard to promote a more equitable international order and is often powerless to prevent violations of the peoples' sovereignty, of freedoms and of human rights.

108. In suggesting this I am fully mindful of the recent detailed report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization [A/37/1]. The ideas underlying this report naturally elicit a deeply felt and positive response from my country.

109. In fact, we share, on the whole, the perceptive evaluations he has made of the causes most frequently responsible for the limited effectiveness of United Nations action. In particular the slow recourse of Member States to the mechanisms provided for in the Charter and the failure to adapt national policies to the specific provisions of the resolutions adopted, especially those adopted unanimously, are in our opinion most often and most directly responsible for the failure of United Nations action.

110. Even though it was signed 37 years ago, the Charter still provides means for prompt and effective action in order both to prevent international crises from arising—before situations have crystallized, sometimes irreversibly—and to ensure the rapid return to a state of normalcy in the areas concerned.

111. It is therefore not outside but fully within the Charter that the study I just mentioned would seek ways of restoring active vitality and decisive effectiveness to the Organization. Such a conscientious analysis could, in our opinion, give rise to a more binding system of collective security, the most solid foundations of which would be constituted by greater under-

standing among Member States in general and, in particular, those with seats on the Security Council.

112. In fact, only the United Nations, constituted and consolidated around an ethical and normative system of peaceful and civilized international co-existence, can point out the difficult but necessary course, not based on the mere reality of the balance of forces but guaranteed by the rule of law and by considerations of justice. It is to this goal that our common efforts must be directed, benefiting from the growing maturity of conscience evident on all sides, and not forgetting that the initial and the most concrete means of expressing our will for peace is constituted by a balanced reduction of nuclear and conventional armaments.

113. Italy is convinced that the way to peace is to be found primarily through development. Hence the need to allow each country to pursue the development course best suited to its own requirements, while respecting its own traditions, and to participate adequately in the global world process of production and distribution of goods.

114. The recent Toronto meetings marked a positive stage within the framework of the North-South dialogue. My country, together with other members of the European Community, has made a concrete effort to solve the problem of financing the sixth replenishment of the International Development Association [IDA] and thus to guarantee adequate aid flows. The understanding concerning the start of negotiations for the further financing of the seventh replenishment of IDA also constitutes a major advance. The problem of the Eight General Review of the International Monetary Fund [IMF] Quotas, even if not finally resolved at Toronto, now appears in a more favourable light as a result of the agreements reached there on the consideration of increased quotas, which we favour.

115. But solution of these and other problems regarding relations between industrialized and emerging countries requires a more rational and adequate negotiating framework. That is why we remain convinced of the urgent need to initiate the global negotiating process. The important developments of the last few months, as reflected in the submission of the draft resolution by the developing countries and in the results of the June Versailles Economic Summit, should induce us to take the present opportunity to reach an agreement. More important than the excessive refinement of the text of a resolution is the setting in motion of a negotiating mechanism and to begin, together, the global study of North-South relations with a view to their improvement and development.

116. On the basis of these assumptions, as well as for other idealistic and humanitarian reasons, my country has decided to make a particular effort in appropriating, for the three-year period 1981-1983, some \$4 billion for development co-operation, notwithstanding the considerable economic difficulties which we, too, are facing.

117. In this context ample priority will be given by Italy to assistance to the less developed countries, particularly in the agro-industrial sector. In April of this year a high-level technical meeting was held in Rome, in preparation for a subsequent meeting at the political level, to discuss in depth the problems of

continued pursuit of the Secretary-General's initiative concerning tripartite negotiations in Geneva.

130. The Polish problem, not only because it is being enacted only a few hundred kilometres from our borders but also because it involves our culture, affects us directly as Italians and Europeans concerned with the construction of an open Europe committed to human rights, peace and progress. The Italian Government and Italian public opinion is deeply concerned about the drama of the Polish nation, whose courageous search for valid and autonomous forms of renewal has been violently interrupted.

131. Unfortunately even the most recent events confirm that there has been no significant development in that area, which is still the scene of a series of challenges to the Polish people's aspiration to freedom, ranging from the persistence of martial law to arbitrary arrests, and contacts between the Government and the bodies most representative of the people have not been resumed. Only a resumption of dialogue and the participation of all the vital forces of the nation can give the support of a consensus to economic revival and social peace.

132. But the situation in Poland is not the only obstacle to the process of détente, the momentum of which unfortunately diminished following the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki. Serious blows have been struck at the foundations of world peace by changes in the balance of forces to the advantage of the East. These balances must be restored. That is the firm resolve of my Government. Italy is ready in this context to make its full contribution to the study and solution of the problems deriving, above all, from the accumulation of all kinds of armaments, often in excess of any reasonable or legitimate national security need. In that spirit and in expectation of general and complete disarmament under strict international control, my country participated with hope and commitment in the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are not taking a sceptical view of that session. We merely say that efforts should be continued and intensified.

133. In this connection, I should like to confirm that my country considers that the solution must be sought in the direction of the zero option, with the aim of ensuring the total elimination by both the Soviet Union and the United States of the lethal and destabilizing medium-range missile systems. Also, as regards the strategic arms reduction talks, Italy is determined to make its own contribution both in the framework of Atlantic consultations and through appropriate bilateral channels with the two Powers involved.

134. While recognizing the objective difficulties in arriving in the near future at a verifiable treaty on the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests, I confirm that my country attaches paramount importance to that objective. However, we must not neglect the very serious issue of chemical weapons. Italy is also committed to progress in negotiations on the subject of conventional weapons, particularly as regards initiatives aimed at limiting and reducing international transfers of that type of weapon.

135. The crisis in the process of détente unfortunately had negative repercussions on the follow-up meeting to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in

Europe, held in Madrid, which after three postponements was approaching a positive outcome. Our concern for safeguarding the process of that Conference, because of its world-wide as well as European importance, led us to agree to a further postponement until the beginning of November, which is now close. We hope that the General Assembly will encourage the European countries to create, in keeping with the provisions of the Final Act of Helsinki, the necessary conditions for the proceedings to be resumed and to move towards a positive conclusion.

136. Unfortunately, the persistence and aggravation of focal points of tension in many parts of the world inevitably cause serious apprehension among the entire international community. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, in his capacity as current President of the European Community, expressed here, at the 8th meeting, the anxiety which we all feel over the world situation and identified and commented in depth and with lucidity on those international problems which, because of their gravity, must be brought to the attention of the Assembly.

137. I am thinking first of all of the Middle East, an area of traditional and direct responsibility for my country, situated as it is in the centre of the Mediterranean region. A moral and political judgement on the recent tragic events in Lebanon is not enough. There must be concrete action if this vicious circle is to be broken. Aware of this fact, Italy made direct efforts with a view to the adoption by the United Nations of measures to deal urgently with that situation. A first important step was the strengthening of the United Nations observer contingent, decided upon by the Security Council in its resolution 521 (1982).

138. In view of the gravity and urgency of the situation and bearing in mind the fact that the consultations held by the Secretary-General had shown that it would be difficult to reach agreement quickly on the deployment of an international force, and also in response to appeals received, Italy decided to take the initiative in ensuring the speedy reconstitution, together with the United States and France, of the multinational force for Beirut, which will act with United Nations observers upon the formal request of the Lebanese Government and in conformity with the objectives of resolution 521 (1982).

139. Following the most dramatic phase of the crisis, it will be necessary to proceed rapidly to the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops and all other foreign forces stationed in Lebanon against the wishes of the lawful authorities of the country, so that the Lebanese Government can exercise its authority fully over the entire national territory. Only thus will Lebanon be able once more to become an element of stability in the region.

140. We must, however, never lose sight of the comprehensive peace settlement that we have long advocated, both on behalf of Italy and in the context of the European approach to the problems of the Middle East, as the sole solution capable of bringing lasting stability to the entire region. This can be achieved only by seeking an equitable solution to the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict, giving equal weight to Israel's right to be recognized and accepted by its neighbours and to exist within secure and

guaranteed boundaries and to the right of the Palestinians to see the fulfilment of their national aspirations. We are thus more convinced than ever of the need to facilitate a start to negotiations that can involve all the leading protagonists in the Middle East conflict. It is particularly necessary that the Israelis and Palestinians should be able to move beyond the logic of confrontation and violence and become aware of the existing realities in the area as a prerequisite for reciprocal recognition, even if it is conditional.

141. Italy looks with interest and appreciation to the possibilities of a breakthrough and the important pronouncements in the recent statements made by the President of the United States, which contain more specific details regarding a solution to the Palestinian problem and give greater prominence to that problem in the general context of the Middle East question.

142. The leaders of the Arab countries, meeting at Fez a few days ago, on the commendable initiative of the King of Morocco, put forward interesting new ideas based on the Fahd plan, ideas which we appreciate and which suggest a high degree of restored unity in the Arab world based on positions which are not extreme but in fact show a trend towards a certain negotiating flexibility.

143. It must be noted that in the Arab world, Egypt—even at the cost of isolation—has set a good example, which certainly gives it a prominent role in those developments. I should like also to mention the contribution made by Jordan to this greater search for negotiated solutions.

144. Recent statements by the leadership of the PLO—which, in Italy's view, continues to be a key factor in future peace negotiations—statements endorsed by Arafat himself at a meeting I had with him some days ago in Rome, show signs of an increased awareness on the Palestinian side. We hope that this development in the Palestinian position, which we have duly noted, will be further consolidated so that in the occupied territories it will be possible to make progress towards the establishment of a Palestinian homeland through the exercise of a free choice by the Palestinians of their own destiny made in full awareness of the realities of the area and the importance of gradualism. This means abandoning any attempt to dispute Israel's existence or to threaten its security. We are convinced that the time has come for Israel also to show determination to enter a new phase of negotiations and peaceful settlement, rejecting the alternatives of confrontation and military action.

145. Italy views also with great apprehension the continuation of the tragic and disastrous conflict between Iraq and Iran. We are aware of the appalling suffering and destruction which the war has brought to the two warring countries and we intend to act in all suitable forums in an endeavour to expedite a peaceful solution to the conflict, in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and in line with the statement issued by the 10 members of the European Community on 24 May 1982 [see A/37/285].

146. Close to the area of the Middle East, in the Near East, there is another crisis—in Cyprus, more limited but for us Mediterraneans a source of serious concern. On 2 July 1982 I visited that island in order to con-

tribute to a speedy solution to the Cyprus problem. That visit afforded a useful opportunity for closer study of the individual aspects of this question with a view to ascertaining what concrete openings could be discerned in the long-standing intercommunal talks. It also provided an opportunity to reiterate Italy's readiness to assist the Secretary-General and his representative in Nicosia in their difficult task of mediation in the negotiations between the two Cypriot communities; their dialogue is useful in itself because it serves to release much tension. The positive change in climate in Greek-Turkish relations could also facilitate rapprochement in the positions of the two sides in Cyprus.

147. Also in connection with the efforts made to create suitable conditions in the Mediterranean for peaceful and profitable collaboration between all the coastal States, we should mention the interest with which the Italian Government views Malta and the consolidation of its position as a neutral nation, whose development along lines of genuine non-alignment we welcome and sincerely encourage.

148. There is another region, the Horn of Africa, with which my country has strong ties and which unfortunately has not yet overcome the serious crisis affecting it. Our commitment to the development of these peoples, both bilateral and multilateral, is growing and in fact we feel that such development is the basic problem to surmount. We feel also that, in a spirit of mutual respect and consideration for the principles established by the Organization of African Unity [OAU], collaboration and negotiation constitute the means for overcoming the present crisis in the Horn of Africa. However, in recent months we have seen a further violation of frontiers—this time to the detriment of Somalia—which is most worrying and which still persists. Everyone must shoulder his responsibilities and an end must be put to those acts of war.

149. To the south on the African continent, despite South African military initiatives in Angola, which we firmly condemn, efforts to pave the way for Namibia's independence as provided for by the United Nations have advanced considerably, although too slowly since 1982 is almost at its end and that goal has not yet been attained. We hope that the necessary trust between the parties will grow during this final stage and serve, among other things, to protect southern Africa from the impact of world tension.

150. The region of the South Atlantic has also been troubled by a serious armed conflict in recent months. Ever since the outbreak of the Anglo-Argentine crisis in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Italy has actively endeavoured to avoid any deterioration of that situation—or at any rate to limit its negative consequences—in close contact with the Governments of the members of the European Community, with the United States and with many Latin American countries, which have similarly attempted to divert the crisis towards a peaceful solution.

151. I recently visited Latin America in the hope that, while taking account of my country's position in the course of the conflict, Italy or I myself could help to restore, in the common interest relations between South America and the European Community.

It is our firm belief that relations, co-operation and understanding between the countries of Europe and Latin America, which are linked by common ties of culture, language and civilization, are essential for world equilibrium.

152. With regard to the specific problem of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Italy's position has been to condemn the act of aggression; it has been and remains in favour of a resumption of the dialogue between London and Buenos Aires, naturally without any pre-conditions concerning the subject under dispute, within the framework of the United Nations and with the possibility of recourse to the good offices of the Secretary-General.

153. Another region of the world of concern to our country is Central America, where, to the local causes of the crisis—found in the age-old but currently unacceptable conditions of cultural, social, political and economic deprivation in which the people are living—have been added recently, following inadmissible foreign interference, the consequences of East-West rivalry.

154. For our part, we believe that every effort should be made to take the uphill path to peace and, consequently, we are in favour of multilateral and bilateral initiatives in this direction, as well as of the assistance programmes thus far implemented to help the countries of the region, to which we hope that the European Community can also contribute.

155. With regard to Asia, the situation in Kampuchea, another independent and non-aligned country that has fallen victim to military occupation, continues to interfere with the development of relations among Asian peoples. My Government considers that the solution of this crisis must be based on the emergence of a sovereign, independent and neutral Kampuchea with a politically representative Government free from any military presence.

156. Also in the context of Asia, I should also like to recall that, unfortunately, the Korean question remains unresolved. The Italian Government would welcome the initiation of a dialogue between the two States aimed at arriving at an agreement guaranteeing peaceful coexistence with a view to the reunification of the peninsula.

157. The peoples consider that the United Nations should eventually become the parliament of concord, peace and co-operation. That is a most noble undertaking, but certainly a very difficult one. We, the States Members of the United Nations, wiser through the painful experiences of our past, which dictate prudent farsightedness and a responsible imagination on our part, must not dash their hopes.

158. I have already indicated that the current panorama of international society is very far from reflecting the great ideals of the San Francisco Charter and that the way in which the machinery it provided is being used is far from satisfactory. My country is convinced that, apart from other ways and means we should explore to remedy that situation, we can take a significant step forward through more intensive action in the main geographical areas, where it is possible to confront problems and relax tensions in the light of the Charter, but also within the framework

of common historical traditions and common economic and social realities.

159. It is on the basis of this conviction that Italy, along with the nine other countries of Western Europe, is committed to the construction of a great economic and political community ready to collaborate with all peoples and capable of being an important factor for balance and progress in the international society—a community that wishes to participate fully in the universal dialogue for which the present forum is the United Nations.

160. With the immediate prospect of new Members, of ever-closer and interlocking ties between the countries of the Community and of the strengthening of those ties already existing between them and groups of countries of other continents, as exemplified by the Lomé Convention, we see how fundamentally important integration effort of our peoples is to the realization of those higher ideals enshrined in the principles of the Charter.

161. Despite the difficulties it encountered, and precisely because of its inherent evolutionary potential, the European Community has during the past 25 years succeeded in giving fuller expression on the old continent and throughout the world to the profound sense of equality, freedom and justice of the Europeans and to their desire for a constant constructive dialogue with all peoples. This opening on the world is the corner-stone of the Community's international action.

162. For those reasons, we view with great satisfaction and interest the parallel development in other major areas in various continents of organizations which deal at the regional level with difficult and often contentious international questions, and which are united in their assessments and decisions by an awareness of shared common interests.

163. Action based on peace, justice and the well-being of peoples which is harmonized at the regional level always has its natural and preferred epicentre in the United Nations. The time is ripe for the development of active solidarity capable of enabling the United Nations to work effectively to translate the progress of the times into human terms and to organize properly the vast new potential of civilization and technology.