



PERMANENT MISSION OF BELGIUM  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,

In my capacity as President of the Council of the European Community and as President of European Political Co-operation, I have the privilege of performing a particularly pleasant task. Mr. President, on the occasion of your election to the presidency of this 32nd General Assembly, allow me to express our heartiest congratulations and to tell you how very pleased we are that you are presiding over this Assembly.

I should also like to assure the Secretary General of our full support for his efforts in the service of the United Nations, and compliment him on the lucidity and conscientiousness with which he discharges his high responsibilities.

Our society contains an extraordinary range of cultures, traditions, races, religions, beliefs and ideologies. In view of this diversity, it is evident that only universal co-operation which unites all members of the international community can create the conditions of stability and well-being that are necessary for ensuring relations among our peoples, based on mutual understanding and a common will to promote peace.

This is the essential role of the United Nations.

I am very pleased, on behalf of the nine members of the European Community, to welcome two new members into our midst : the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and

the Republic of Djibouti. Our warmest congratulations are extended to them.

For 25 years now, certain countries of Western Europe have been trying to put into practice the lesson of History by establishing a durable peace among themselves and creating the conditions necessary for the improvement of the well-being of their peoples. This is the goal which the European Community has set for itself. Little by little, co-operation among the members of the Community continues to grow. But this task would be insufficient if the European Community did not participate, as efficiently as possible, in the safeguard of peace in the world and in the struggle against underdevelopment.

It seems to me that these objectives are absolutely fundamental and that beyond ideological conflicts there must exist ways and means of conducting fruitful dialogues that will bring these objectives nearer. The nations of the European Community have no intention of shrinking from their responsibilities and they intend to play their proper role in the international community. The European Nine made their common views in this regard quite clear in the declaration published by the Council of Europe on 17 July 1975. A copy of this declaration was sent to all the member states of the United Nations.

The Nine put their principles into practice in the Lomé Convention by establishing a balanced framework for co-operation and by instituting a dialogue on a new basis with a number of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Much still needs to be done. We are determined to continue along this path in order to find fair solutions.

In addition to this regional approach, the European Nine intend to act on a more global scale by co-operating with the totality of developing nations. Our system of generalized preferences is the first step in this direction.

We reaffirm our will to achieve a structural improvement in the position of developing countries in the world economy.

The European Community is fully aware of its particular obligations. It will continue, to the extent of its means, to give aid in the form of food and materials to countries suffering from extreme poverty and to peoples afflicted by war and natural catastrophes. Its Member States reaffirm their will to increase their aid to development, effectively and substantially, and better to balance their efforts in this respect.

In co-operation with developing countries, they are determined to devote a progressively more important part of their efforts to programmes intended to satisfy the essential needs of man. In order that all developing nations benefit from this new orientation, they have also agreed to examine the importance and the attribution of the aid to development with a view to increase the volume and the effectiveness in the framework of an enlarged international effort.

At this point, I would like to address myself to certain current situations which deserve the special attention of this assembly.

## 1. Middle East

Anything that affects the stability and prosperity of the countries of Africa and the Middle East is of the greatest interest to the European Nine. We have close historical ties with these countries which are deepening in all fields of human activity.

With regard to the situation in the Near East, over which the Nine continue to be gravely concerned, they remain convinced, as a matter of principle, that any solution must be based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, as they affirmed on 29 June 1977, as well as being based on the following fundamental principles :

- acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable ;
- Israel must end its occupation of territories it has held since the 1967 war ;
- the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of each state in the region must be respected, as well as the right of each state in the region to live in peace within secure and recognised borders ;
- the establishment of a just and durable peace must give due consideration to the rights of the Palestinians.

The Nine also continue to believe that a solution to the conflict will be possible only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact. This would take into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people.

It remains the firm view of the Nine that all these aspects must be taken as a whole.

They consider that the representatives of the parties in the conflict, including the Palestinian people, must participate in the negotiations in an appropriate manner to be worked out in consultation between all the parties concerned. In the context of an overall settlement, Israel must be ready to recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people ; equally, the Arab side must be ready to recognise the right of Israel to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries.

Speaking practically, the Nine are prepared to collaborate, to the extent desired by the interested parties, in the search for a general and definitive solution, and to implement this, notably through participation in the context of the United Nations, in guarantees that the Nine consider of the greatest importance for a general solution of the problems of the Middle East.

One should recall that the Nine have publicly stated their concern over the illegal measures taken recently by the Government of Israel in the occupied territories, and which will be the subject of a new point on the agenda of our Assembly. These measures are contrary to the basic principles which I have just stated. Moreover, they constitute an additional obstacle in the process of negotiation which should lead to a peaceful solution.

Looking forward to peace negotiations, the Nine reaffirm what they have expressed on many occasions, in that the parties to the conflict should refrain from making any declarations and adopting any measures, administrative, legal, military or other, which would constitute an obstacle to the process of peace.

Moreover, the Nine reaffirm their continuing support for Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity. They deplore that the South of the country should be the scene of bloodshed, endangering the efforts to establish peace in the Middle East, and they call upon all parties concerned to halt the fighting.

## 2. Cyprus

The efforts undertaken by the United Nations to find a solution to the question of Cyprus are well known. I should like to reaffirm the support of the Nine for the efforts which the Secretary-General puts forward in the accordance with the mandate he received from our Organisation. The Nine believe that everything must be done to search for a negotiated solution, both durable and fair, through consultations between the two communities.

In this respect, I recall that on 18 February 1977, the Nine stated their satisfaction on the subject of the the Nicosia meeting of February 12. They hope that conversations between the two communities will resume as quickly as possible in the same spirit which inspired that meeting. The Nine reaffirm their support of the principle of territorial integrity of the Cypriot Republic.

Through appropriate steps, the Nine continue to urge all parties concerned to pursue their consultations.

## 3. Apartheid

We remain firmly opposed to all forms of racial discrimination, wherever it exists. I had the opportunity to express the position of the Nine concerning

apartheid at the Lagos Conference. The Nine condemn apartheid and reject it as an insult to the dignity of man and as a form of institutionalised racism that deprives the majority of the population of their full civil and political rights.

Events in the past year have demonstrated the growing frustration of the black population and the intransigence of the South African Government.

As I stated at the Lagos Conference, apartheid cannot work : I then expressed the view of the Nine that the Bantustan policy, far from solving the problems posed by apartheid, was in fact a means of perpetuating it.

I should also point out that the Nine recently decided to examine a variety of different actions they could take to bring their collective influence to bear on South Africa to put an end to apartheid.

Thus the Nine have recently adopted a code of conduct for all their firms with subsidiaries, branches or representation in South Africa. The publication of this code constitutes a first measure among others which are still being examined.

We will do everything possible to try to bring about a non-racial government in South Africa that will permit the peoples of that country to participate fully in the life of the nation.



#### 4. Namibia

We declared at the Maputo Conference, as well as in the message issued on the occasion of Namibia Day, that we support the right of the peoples of Rhodesia and Namibia to self-determination, to independence, and to the enjoyment of the fundamental rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Concerning Namibia, it is our position that the Namibians should be able to exercise these rights in a democratic fashion under the supervision of the United Nations, and that all political groups should be able to participate, including SWAPO. Any solution of the Namibian problem must be based on Security Council Resolution 385.

The Nine express the strong desire that efforts currently underway will lead to success. Some valuable progress has already been made. This may be a unique opportunity for securing a peaceful and early transition to independence and the Nine stand ready to assist in this process in any way they can.

#### 5. Zimbabwe

Time is running out for settling the Rhodesia issue : it seems to us essential to use every possible means to bring to an end a conflict which could have repercussions throughout Africa and to bring about independence for Zimbabwe in 1978 on the basis of majority rule. We commend the efforts being made at present to achieve an early settlement along these lines,

whilst observing strictly the obligations resulting from the Charter in the field of sanctions. In order for Zimbabwe to develop properly there will be a need for economic assistance to help provide a solution to the basic problems with which this new State will find itself confronted after the disappearance of the illegal minority regime. Members of the Community are prepared to consider carefully and sympathetically proposals that have already been made for a Zimbabwe Development Fund. "

#### 6. Africa in General

The African continent is seeking stability. Africa must find this stability as well as its own identity. We know that this is the objective of all the peoples of Africa, which is why I am eager to reiterate the position of the Nine in this regard. The Nine strongly reject any intervention by any state which seeks to establish a zone of influence on the African continent. It is the African states, and the African states alone, who must find the solutions to their problems.

Recent events in the Horn of Africa underline the importance of this principle of non-intervention.

Any aid given to Africa must be aid that the nations of Africa desire, and it must be given under conditions that the Africans themselves have determined are in their best interest.

## 7. Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

As for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Community considers that the final declaration of Helsinki is a very important constituent element of the broader question of détente. Therefore, it constitutes a capital contribution to the efforts aiming at the consolidation of peace within the international community. This document must be considered as a whole, and each of its parts must be correctly implemented, lest it should not answer the hopes it had raised.

A precise and logical working plan defined during a preparatory meeting, should allow the meeting at Belgrade which will examine the follow-up of the Conference in a few days' time, to look at each of the themes of the final declaration, both with respect to their implementation in the past and to the stimulation of this implementation in the future.

## 8. Economic problems

I would now like to deal with international economic relations. One of the tasks of the current General Assembly will be to evaluate progress made in international co-operation and to determine how this co-operation should evolve in the years ahead.

The same subject was debated extensively, here, a few days ago. But our work during the next three months is more ambitious and perhaps more difficult. The Community feels that real progress has been made recently in the field of international economic co-operation. In this respect, the Paris Conference has yielded positive results in several important areas. The Community will see to it that the Paris agreements are implemented in the near future.

I do not want to express feelings of unmitigated satisfaction, for we must remain realistic, and recognise the aspirations of the international community for a new international economic order. The European Community remains convinced of the need to bring about a fundamental improvement in the position of developing countries in the world economy, taking into account the problems of the least developed countries. If I am not pessimistic, then it is because the international community has made significant efforts in important sectors with the aim of narrowing down differences and reconciling diverse interests. A case in point are the many ongoing negotiations this year, such as those on an integrated programme for commodities and on a common fund. In those areas, solutions are within reach and the Community will continue to participate in those discussions with an open mind, seeking tangible solutions.

Mr. President, sometimes circumstances or the economic climate tend to interfere with good intentions and hamper our lines of action. The Community is not immune to the difficulties currently facing many nations. It struggles with the problems of inflation and unemployment. The joint efforts which the Member States make to maintain an adequate level of economic activity, and even induce proper growth, meet with difficulties which are far from being solved. In some sectors of the economy, those problems have recently become exacerbated and no immediate or permanent cure is in sight.

Nonetheless, if the Community must try to protect its own internal equilibrium - which has a considerable impact on harmonious worldwide economic relations - it doesn't choose to withdraw within itself. The concept of integration is the basis of the Community, as is its overture to the world.

We understand the problems resulting from the present economic climate, but we reject protectionism as a defense. Therefore, the Community will continue to contribute substantially to the multilateral trade negotiations within GATT and it hopes that these talks will yield concrete results, satisfying in particular the developing countries.

The Community has established a worldwide network of association and co-operation agreements. Some of those formulas for co-operation, which I have already mentioned, are innovations. But we intend to go beyond this. The Lomé Convention has been followed, in 1976, by the signing of a new series of agreements with Maghreb and Near East countries.

We also hope that during the meeting which is to be held in Brussels from 26-28 October, the dialogue between the Nine and the members of the League of Arab states will yield concrete results which are of a definite interest to all participants.

With regard to the Mediterranean countries, the Community has adopted a policy of global approach. This has taken shape through a series of new contractual agreements, linking the Community to practically every Mediterranean country. This was done in the interest

of all countries concerned, in the interest of development and, therefore, of the stability in this sensitive part of the world. This regional approach has been complemented by a global policy in favour of developing countries. In this regard, the Scheme of Generalised Preferences for 1977 has been substantially improved in comparison with last year. New orientations have been given to food aid. In general, efforts are being made to ensure the co-ordination and harmonisation of policies of development co-operation by the Community.

I mention these accomplishments without conceit, fully aware that they can be perfected and may be deemed inadequate.

I am also pleased to note that contacts between the Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance are developing.

We are also very satisfied with the recent progress towards negotiation of a commercial agreement with the People's Republic of China, which I hope will soon materialise.

We are convinced that the United Nations are bound to play a fundamental role in the efforts of the international community towards the restructuring of economic relations.

The Community attaches great importance to the work done in United Nations fora. It will continue its efforts towards a positive contribution. It wants to reiterate its desire to co-operate and to avoid a climate

of confrontation which could only harm the international community as a whole. In this respect, we have been able to witness, in particular during the 7th special session of this Assembly, how a spirit of dialogue can prevail over confrontation. We cannot make real progress by opposing each other or through formulas too far removed from the reality of our economic structures.

In this spirit of realism, and not precluding the will to redress any imbalances, we should turn our thoughts to the contents of the new strategy for development, which will unquestionably be one of the major future tasks in the realisation of the objectives of a new international economic order.

## 9. Human Rights

If the Nine are preoccupied with trying to establish peace in the world as well as with the quest for a more equitable society, they also want to make a contribution to the effective protection of Human Rights, both in civil and political, as well as social and cultural fields.

Mr. President, the Members of the Community share the feelings you yourself have expressed at the beginning of our work, i.e. Human Rights comprise economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, and they are all interdependent and inseparable.

It is evident that peace, justice and equity are inconceivable without those guarantees in Human Rights against the abuses of arbitrariness and all forms of exploitation.

Our general public opinion knows that this is an essential question and it is the duty of Governments and of the United Nations to provide adequate answers.

The Nine are pleased by the progress that has been made by the international community in the field of Human Rights. The United Nations play a key role in this area. But the task is still far from being accomplished. During the course of this session, the General Assembly will turn its attention to a number of initiatives directed toward further safeguarding and implementing Human Rights.



Some of these initiatives are concerned with specific rights and their particular implementation. This is notably the case with the initiative concerning the taking of hostages. We express the hope that a political will will inspire those who are participating in the work which may lead to the drafting of a Convention in this field. This is why we favour the continuation of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee which was created for this purpose by the 31st General Assembly.

Other initiatives aim at reinforcing the mechanisms by which Human Rights are implemented.

Finally, another category seeks to re-establish respect for Human Rights in special situations where these rights seem to be scoffed at.

It is the intention of the Nine to examine these initiatives according to their merits and the extent to which they are likely to achieve their aims.

We hope that, beyond differing doctrines and political systems, this General Assembly will find it possible to realise what must be our true objective. This is : To give man his rightful place in the world and to ensure that terror, oppression and injustice will be mere curiosities to be found in the textbooks of history.

These observations I have just made were made in my capacity as the representative of the country which currently holds the presidency of the European Community. I would now like to add a few thoughts as Minister for Foreign Affairs for Belgium.

The occasion of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations gave each of us an opportunity to reflect on the nature of this Organisation, the way it operates and hopes for its future. In the report that he has just submitted to the present session, the Secretary General has described the current situation of the United Nations. I would like to applaud his ceaseless efforts and tell him how much Belgium agrees with his analysis. The report, of course, reflects certain worries but it also reflects the hope and conviction that must be at the heart of all our actions.

Like all human endeavours, our Organisation is not perfect. But rather than stressing its weaknesses and opting for fatalism or despair, is it not our duty to support the efforts that are daily undertaken to reinforce the role that it can, and must play. Today more than ever, the United Nations are necessary and indispensable. They represent hope for many Nations. They must be the supreme resort, the guardian of international law, and the light that guides our steps through trial and distress.

Over the past 30 years, the number of U.N. members has tripled and we are coming closer each day to the ideal of universality which we all share. The activities of the Organisation have also multiplied, particularly in the fields of social and economic development, to which

next year we will dedicate more than one billion dollars. This is only a part of the funds that Member States will make available to about 20 organisations and institutions that today are part of the system of the United Nations.

The modest undertaking of Lake Success has been transformed into an assembly of organisations for which it is imperative to harmonise objectives and co-ordinate efforts.

We offer determined support to the General Assembly as well as to all its subsidiary organs, to measures which promote unified action and increase the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations. To achieve these goals, we must daily strive for a better definition of priorities, an integrated planning of programmes and the encouragement of a policy of curtailed expenses and budgetary conservatism that will allow a larger portion of available resources to be dedicated to projects which will be of particular benefit to developing nations.

Some progress has been made in these areas over the past two years. The biennial budget proposed by the Secretary General makes this quite clear.

However, the transformation of the world and the urgency of its needs require more. It is necessary indeed to effect a major restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, which has been the objective for the past two years of the Special Committee created by the General Assembly.

Beyond these basic concerns in administration and effectiveness, we must reflect on the role and the action of the Organisation. Although, strictly speaking, the Organisation deals with States, its ultimate objective remains the destiny of man.

World opinion, to which we should give due attention, has shown the way by making Human Rights more and more a matter of essential preoccupation.

Our Organisation boasts already considerable achievements but their implementation remains too often theoretical. Our prime role is to convert theory into practice. In this spirit, the Belgian delegation would like to remind this forum of the proposal it made a year ago in the context of Resolution 1503 of the Economic and Social Council.

The funeral of Mr. Stephen Biko, yesterday in Kingwilliamstown, is a tragic reminder of the fate of the victims of the flagrant breach of Human Rights which is apartheid, and that of political prisoners which, throughout the world appeals to universal conscience. He will always be remembered.

But we will not have fully respected the ultimate objective of our Organisation if we limit our concern for mankind to the promotion and defence of Human Rights, however important this aspect of our activity may be.

One of our major preoccupations must be to seek ways of maintaining peace and international security. The scope is wide. It includes the control, limitation and reduction of the use of arms in the solution of regional disputes.

In this respect, the problems of disarmament require an integrated approach which must not only be based on measures of arms control and reduction, but also on a parallel strengthening of the means of a peaceful settlement of disputes.

The task is great. In a world still dominated essentially by the balance of power and ideological conflicts, international relations are always marked by mistrust and fear that a shift in the balance of power will lead to an arms race. Détente remains a precarious phenomenon and efforts to strengthen international security have been undoubtedly greater than the achievements obtained.

However, the disproportion between the enormity of the task and the paucity of results should not make us pessimistic.

Have we not seen, since the 1960s, the beginnings of an international legislation in arms control? discussions and negotiations are more intense than ever in essential fields such as non-proliferation and stoppage of nuclear tests and the banning of chemical weapons.

Regional and bilateral efforts, such as SALT and MBFR have also been undertaken and deserve the encouragement of all countries.

Unquestionably, the world has reached a new level of consciousness; disarmament has become a universal concern notwithstanding the special duties and obligations of the great powers.

Such a state of mind augurs well of the next special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This could be an important landmark on the road to general, complete and controlled disarmament, provided of course that all major military powers would be included, beginning with the nuclear military powers. It will be

important to avoid dogma and to stay clear of the dangers of pursuing sterile perfectionism.

It is within this essentially pragmatic and concrete context that my country has the intention to propose a study, based on ideas brought forward last year, to evaluate the possibilities offered by the regional approach. The regional approach is in no way intended to replace the global approach, but rather to complete it in the fields of nuclear and conventional arms.

Indeed :

circumstances in a given region could favour certain specific measures which could be inapplicable in other regions or on a world scale ;  
in general, it is easier to get around complex problems of disarmament and arms control at the regional level and at the level of a group of States.

On the other hand, some questions require a universal solution. I am thinking notably of the problem of nuclear non-proliferation.

Few problems create such near unanimity concerning the principle and such discord concerning the solution. Why ? If all the world agrees to denounce the risks of nuclear proliferation, implementation of a policy of non-proliferation, as in other areas of international life, inevitably brings the "Haves" and the "Have Nots" into opposition. Those countries which already possess nuclear weapons, and therefore certain skills and techniques, are put into opposition to those countries which do not have nuclear weapons, those who have nuclear technology to those who do not and those who produce the indispensable fuels to those whose soil does not contain this commodity.

Respect for the principle of non-proliferation must therefore grow out of a solution to these problems and that solution requires internationalisation of nuclear means. All current and future civilian nuclear technology as well as all necessary equipment and fuel must be available equally to every one of us, without discrimination between those who possess nuclear weapons and, not only those who do not but also those who have voluntarily renounced them in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This treaty has required an infinitely greater sacrifice of sovereignty of those countries that do not have nuclear weapons than has been required of their partners that do possess them.

If, as seems to be the case, it is now necessary to go beyond the treaty, to further protect mankind from the dangers of nuclear proliferation, it is for the nuclear States this time to set the example of sacrifice by committing themselves to equal access for all to nuclear technology, equipment and fuels. Such must be the basis of the action of the United Nations as well as the nuclear States, who should set an example by engaging in a discussion leading to serious and substantial measures toward nuclear disarmament.

I had occasion to refer to our preoccupation and that of our partners in the European Community with regard to the great problems in international affairs.

It seems essential to me that these problems be approached in the spirit of mutual good will, understand-

ing of each other's needs, and which must also reign within the United Nations.

If we work in this spirit, there is only one path we can follow: We must redouble our confidence in the United Nations and more than ever stride forward, seeking the just and durable peace that all the peoples of the world expect of us.

Thank you, Mr. President.