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Plenary meetings

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**Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Conference**

BOUTROS-GHALI, Boutros (UN Secretary-General):

I have the pleasure of inviting the President of the Federal Republic of Austria to address the World Conference on Human Rights. Your Excellency.

KLESTIL, Thomas (Austria), *spoke in German*:

**Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT - ETHNIC CONFLICTS – RELIGIONS**

The Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen!

It is a great pleasure for me to be able to welcome you here today on behalf of the Republic of Austria, here in Vienna, for the World Conference on Human Rights of the United Nations. I would like to extend my welcome to the delegates from all parts of the world, the representatives of Governments, and the large number of human rights organizations, which render invaluable services to the cause of humanity.

I also would like to welcome the many thousands of persons who are not part of this meeting and who serve with great devotion to enforce human rights. I would like to thank you and I would like to ask you all not to tire in your task as guardians and advocates. After all, experience from history tells us that we need this constant pressure from without in order to improve the world and make it better against all the resistances that there are.

At this very hour, I would like to think of the many victims of human rights violations throughout the world. It is their boundless suffering that gives this conference its special topicality and urgency. The results of our deliberations will be measured by their desperate hopes.

At the time when the United Nations decided to hold this important conference here in Vienna, nobody could imagine that so close to us, in the middle of Europe, we would be faced with the helplessness of the community of States vis-à-vis mass killings and torture, vis-à-vis rape, persecution and forced evacuation.

Of course, we all know that this orgy of unlimited violence in Bosnia is only one tragedy of many, where human rights are currently being trampled on. Serious and repeated crimes against humanity continue to occur throughout the world, in all parts of the world, with terrifying frequency. But hardly ever before have we witnessed this process of dehumanization and of international helplessness with such clarity as in recent months.

It is particularly on this account and because we have a responsibility vis-à-vis all those human rights violations that occur simultaneously outside of our attention, we must use the World Conference on Human Rights to draw a lesson from these terrible events and to act quickly.

The profound global changes of recent years, the end of the East-West conflict and the advance of democracy and the rule of law in many parts of the world create a special opportunity for this historical task.

Today, at last, many open questions in the field of human rights have been freed of the many ideological and power constraints of recent decades.

There is nothing today to prevent us from accepting the human rights as a common achievement of all of mankind, to which everyone is entitled to the same extent. If we do this, and I think it is high time to do so, then this is inseparably linked to the confession that following up human rights violation is not an interference into the internal matters of a State.

As regards the common battle against inhuman action, nobody can and must veil behind a wall of sovereignty and forced silence. We will be able to lead the world towards more freedom and peace only if, at last, we agree that elementary questions of human rights are not only a right but are also an obligation affording our common protection. It seems to be just as important to me, that today we recognize the inseparable and close interaction between human rights, democracy and development, and that we advocate the indivisibility of human rights, including the right of development and the right to development. If we do so, and again it is high time to do so, we will emphasize at the same time that nobody may abuse implementation of any one of these rights as a pretext for a violation of other rights.

We know today that many of the most severe violations against human rights are the consequence of ethnic conflicts. The helplessness with which the community of States faces these ethnic conflicts underlines the deficit that we have as regards rules and standards in the field of rights of ethnic minorities. However, whenever there are rules, practical experience often shows that they are too weak to avoid and prevent disasters. To secure the peaceful cohabitation of many groups, different groups, is one of the central issues at the end of the 20th century.

It must be a priority objective of this conference, therefore, to discuss openly the tasks and the effectiveness of the United Nations and existing obstacles of any kind in the light of the previous experience. There is a great demand for a reform here, because the continued disrespect and violation of human rights before the very eyes of the world and even in spite of the direct presence of the United Nations, leads to a massive loss of prestige of the community of States and its international organizations. This very dangerous development comes at a time when we actually should be doing everything in order to strengthen the world organization as a center of a new global community of security and safety.

Only if we reevaluate the position of human rights in the system of the world organization and if we create early warning systems in connection with human rights violations to ensure more efficient means of reacting rapidly and effectively - only then will we be making a concrete contribution towards overcoming the deep gap between the hope of people and the reality, which is often terrifying.

Respect for the human and minority rights is also a question of training and education. We all, excepting nobody, must dedicate all our energy to that task. Hatred and racism are often the product of failures of home, school and society. This can be seen very clearly in a most terrifying manner in many European countries. Whenever there is a lack of human warmth and compassion, the ground is prepared for evil seeds. Therefore, in addition to the obligation of States to uphold human rights, everybody, every individual, has the obligation to be more human, tolerant and charitable. It is precisely here that the religions of the world have ample scope for activities and without their active participation, this work cannot be achieved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This conference is a major challenge, is one of the tests that we face after the historical changes of recent years. If we want genuine peace, then we must act quickly. My dream is the following - a world where there is place for the different peoples, ethnic groups and cultures; but where there is also place for equal human rights. The times of silence, of looking on, of noninterference in connection with violations of human rights must have come to an end at last. I would therefore ask you to rally all your forces in order to make this global effort against all the resistance into progress for humanity.

It is in this spirit that I would like to wish the World Conference on Human Rights of the United Nations and your deliberations the best of success.

Thank you very much.

BOUTROS-GHALI, Boutros (UN Secretary-General):

**Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING - HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE - DEMOCRATIZATION - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

I thank His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Austria, for his important statement. The Secretary-General of the World Conference and myself shall now accompany His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Austria, as he leaves the Hall. May I invite delegations to remain seated while I do so.

With the permission, I intend to present my statement.

*Spoke in French:*

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The World Conference on Human Rights being convened today at Vienna marks one of those rare, defining moments when the entire community of States finds itself under the gaze of the world!

It is the gaze of the billions of men and women, who yearn to recognize themselves in the discussions that we shall be conducting and the decisions that we shall be taking in their name. It is the gaze of all those men and women who even now are suffering in body and spirit because their human dignity is not recognized or is being flouted. It is the gaze of history as we meet at this crucial juncture. When the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments and the organizations concerned on the desirability of convening a world conference on human rights, it was at that time demonstrating remarkable historical intuition.

Two months later, the Berlin Wall had fallen, carrying away with it a certain vision of the world, and thereby opening up new perspectives. It was in the name of freedom, democracy and human rights that entire peoples were speaking out. Their determination, their abnegation - sometimes their sacrifices - reflected then, and still reflect, their commitment to do away with alienation and totalitarianism.

Thus, preparations for today's Conference have gone hand-in-hand with an impressive acceleration of the course of history.

That conjunction of events must not be seen as pure chance or mere coincidence. It is always when the world is undergoing a metamorphosis, when certainties are collapsing, when the lines are becoming blurred, that

there is greatest recourse to fundamental reference points, that the quest for ethics becomes more urgent, that the will to achieve self-understanding becomes imperative.

It is therefore only natural that the international community should today feel the need to focus on its own values; and reflecting on its history ask itself what constitutes its innermost identity - in other words, ask questions about humanity and about how, by protecting humanity, it protects itself.

The goals of the Conference faithfully reflect the following key questions:

What progress has been made in the field of human rights since the Universal Declaration of 1948?

What are the obstacles and how are they to be overcome?

How can implementation of the human rights instruments be enhanced?

How effective are the methods and mechanisms established by the United Nations?

What financial resources should be allocated for United Nations action to promote human rights?

At a deeper level, what are the links between the goals pursued by the United Nations and human rights, especially the link between development, democracy and the universal enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights?

These universally shared questions do not have, though, a single answer. While human rights have a common objective for all members of the international community, and while each member of that community recognizes himself in these questions, each culture has its own special way of formulating the answer. In this connection, a debt of thanks is owed to Member States, which - at the regional level - have reminded others of this reality.

Yet this reminder must be a source of positive reflection, not of sterile misunderstanding.

Indeed, human rights viewed at the universal level bring us face-to-face with the most challenging dialectical conflict ever: between "identity" and "otherness", between "myself" and "others." It teaches us in a straightforward manner that we are at the same time identical and yet different.

Thus, the human rights that we proclaim and seek to safeguard can be brought about only if we transcend ourselves, only if we make a conscious effort to find our common essence beyond our apparent divisions, our temporary differences, our ideological and cultural barriers.

In sum, what I mean to say, with all solemnity, is that the human rights we are about to discuss here at Vienna are not the lowest common denominator among all nations, but rather what I would like to describe as the "irreducible human element." In other words, the quintessence of values through which we affirm together that we are a single human community!

I do not want to underestimate the nature of the undertaking in front of us. Yet in such an area, this is no time to seek cautious compromise or approximate solutions, to be content with soothing declarations, or, worse

still, to become bogged down in verbal battles. On the contrary, we must ascend to such a conception of human rights that would make such rights truly universal!

Precisely there lies the challenge of our endeavor and precisely there lies our work, as it is also there that the results of this Conference will be judged by future evaluations.

To start our debate in the best conditions, even go towards developing a method of debate, we should be aware of the complexities of human rights, because they are at the same time an absolute yardstick and a process of historical synthesis.

As an absolute yardstick, human rights constitute the common language of humanity. Adopting this language allows all peoples to understand others and at the same time be the authors of their own history. Human rights, by definition, are the ultimate norm of all politics.

As a process of historical synthesis, human rights are, in their essence, the rights in constant movement. By that I mean that human rights have a dual nature. They express absolute, timeless injunctions, yet simultaneously reflect a moment in the development of history. Human rights

The reason I began with these statements of principle - at the risk of appearing very abstract - the reason is that I am convinced that there will be no appropriate solutions to any of the issues that we shall be considering in the coming days, even the most technical; unless we bear in mind the fundamental dialectical conflict between the universal and the particular, between identity and difference.

What makes our task especially urgent is the fact that with the development of communications, with this technical revolution, every day the whole world is called to witness the free enjoyment - or the violation - of human rights.

Not a day goes by without scenes of warfare or famine, arbitrary arrest, torture, rape, murder, expulsion, transfers of population, and ethnic cleansing. Not a day goes by without reports of attacks on the most fundamental freedoms. Not a day goes by without reminders of racism and the crimes it spawns, intolerance and the excesses it breeds, underdevelopment and the ravages it causes!

What confronts those men, women and children who are suffering and dying is a reality that is more unbearable than ever - we are all similar, yet history emphasizes our differences and erects between us all sorts of barriers: political, economic, social and cultural.

Clearly we have indeed learned that it is possible to view differences as such with respect and as sources of mutual enrichment; yet when differences become synonymous with inequalities, they cannot but be perceived as unjust. Today, all peoples and all nations share these feelings. That fact in itself is a step forward in the conscience of humanity.

The more so since the move from identifying inequality to rebelling against injustice has only been possible in the context of a universal affirmation of the idea of human rights. Ultimately, it is this idea that allows us to move from ethical to legal considerations, and to impose a scale of values and legal norms on human activity.

Let us not delude ourselves, however, because this scale of norms and values is also a part of the power stakes. No doubt, this is why some

States seek - often and by various means - to appropriate human rights for their own benefit, even turning human rights into an instrument of national policy. There is no denying that some States constantly try to hijack or confiscate human rights.

Of course, in saying this, I do not mean to point a finger at any member of the international community. I only want to stress that human rights, in their very expression, reflect a power relationship.

Let us be clear about this! Human rights are closely related to the way in which States consider them; in other words, to the ways in which States govern their people; in yet other words, to the level of democracy in their political regimes!

If we bear all these problems in mind, I am positive that we shall avert the dual danger lurking ahead of us at the outset of this Conference. The danger of a cynical approach according to which the international dimension of human rights is nothing more than an ideological cover for the realpolitik of States; and the danger of a naive approach, according to which the expression of universally shared values towards which all the international community naturally aspire.

This consideration should remain present in our minds throughout all our discussions to enable us to make bold proposals and remain firm in our principles.

In this regard, I should like to solemnly call on this Conference to measure up to its subject and that it should be guided by a threefold requirement, which I shall refer to as "the three imperatives of the Vienna Conference": universality, guarantees, democratization.

Let us deal first with the imperative of universality. To be sure, human rights are a product of history. As such, they should be in accordance with history, should evolve simultaneously with history and should give the various peoples and nations a reflection of themselves that they recognize as their own. Yet, this equation of human rights with the course of history should not change what constitutes their essence, namely their universality!

Second issue is the imperative of guarantee, of control. We see every day how much in the eyes international opinion the human rights and the United Nations itself will be discredited if the declarations, conventions, charters and treaties that we draft in order to protect human rights remained dead letters or were constantly violated. Human rights should, therefore be covered by effective mechanisms and procedures of guarantee, protection and sanctions.

Lastly, there is the imperative of democratization. In my opinion, this is essentially what is at stake, what is crucial as we approach the end of the century. Only democracy, within States and within the community of States, is the true guarantor of human rights. It is through democracy that individual rights and collective rights, the rights of peoples and the rights of persons, are reconciled. It is through democracy that the rights of States and the rights of the community of States are reconciled. It is these imperatives - universality, guarantee, democratization that I would like you to elaborate on. The imperative of universality will be definitely present in all discussions. How could it be any different, the universality is inherent to human rights. The Charter expresses in the most categorical way affirming in Article 55 that the United Nations shall promote "universal respect for, and observance of, rights and fundamental freedoms

for all without distinction as to race, language, or religion". The title of the 1948 Declaration - universal, international - reinforces this perspective.

However, this concept of universality is something that must also be clearly understood and accepted by everyone. It would be a contradiction in terms if this imperative of universality, on which our common conception of human rights is based, were to become a source of misunderstanding among us.

It must therefore be stated, in the clearest possible terms, that universality is not something that is decreed, nor is it the expression of the ideological domination of one group of States over the rest of the world.

By its nature and composition, it is the General Assembly of the United Nations that is best equipped to express this idea of universality; and we should pay tribute to the human rights standard-setting in which it has been engaged for almost 50 years now.

As a result of its activities, the areas of protection have become increasingly precise: punishment of genocide, abolition of slavery, efforts to combat torture, elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race, sex, religion or belief.

Moreover, the subjects of those rights have been more clearly defined: right of peoples; protection of refugees, stateless persons, women, children, disabled persons, persons with mental illness, protection of prisoners, victims of enforced disappearance; protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families; and protection of indigenous peoples. In this connection, the General Assembly is to be commended for drafting, as part of the activities relating to the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, a universal declaration for consideration next autumn.

The set of instruments resulting from this standard-setting by the United Nations General Assembly is now our common property. It has enough to satisfy all States, all peoples and all cultures, for the universality it affirms is that of the international community as a whole.

If we look closely at these instruments, and the World Conference on Human Rights affords an ideal opportunity to do so, we may be struck by, and at the same time justifiably proud of, the ceaseless efforts made by the General Assembly to develop on the very idea of universality.

Indeed, while a general, abstract concept of human rights, born of liberal values, prevailed initially, as we can see from the text of the 1948 Universal Declaration, the input of the socialist States and the States of the Third World helped to broaden this initial vision. The 1966 Covenants bear witness to the broadening of our vision. They enable us to affirm, and I wish to emphasize this here, that civil and political rights on one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other hand are equally important and worthy of attention.

We all know, however, that the General Assembly did not stop there: it expanded still further on the concept of universality by enunciating, after these collective rights, what I like to call rights of solidarity, rights that bring us back to a projected universality involving the joint action of all members of society both nationally and internationally. Since Article 1 of the Charter enunciated the right of peoples to self-

determination, the General Assembly has proclaimed the right to a healthy environment, the right to peace, the right to food security, the right to ownership of the common heritage of mankind and, above all, the right to development.

I believe that this last right, it seems to me, is a particular invitation to understand the modernity of the concept of universality. The General Assembly went a long way towards recognizing this when, as early as 1979, it asserted that "the right to development is an inalienable human right" and that "equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations".

This idea was expressed even more clearly when, in 1986, the Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Right to Development, which states that "the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development". In that same instrument, the Assembly emphasizes the corresponding duties that this right imposes on States: the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development, the duty to formulate international development policies and, at the national level, the duty to ensure "access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income".

I think that this approach to deepening of the concept of universality is the right one and that it is this course that we should follow.

We must recognize that while ideological splits and economic disparities may continue to be the hallmark of our international society, they cannot interfere with the universality of human rights.

I believe that at this moment in time it is less urgent to define new rights than to persuade States to adopt existing instruments and to apply them effectively.

I am convinced that the regional organizations play an important role in making States increasingly aware of this problem. Regional action for the promotion of human rights in no way conflicts with United Nations action at the universal level - quite the opposite.

In the recent regional meetings on human rights I wanted to see the concern to remain true to this concept of universality, no matter what serious problems or legitimate questions it may raise.

The second imperative of the Vienna Conference, the imperative of guarantee of control must be our second concern here at this conference.

What do human rights amount to without suitable machinery and structures to ensure their effectiveness, both internally and internationally? Here again, the Vienna Conference must not lapse into unproductive debates or futile polemics. To avoid this, the Conference must go back to the very essence of human rights in international society, and to what is unique about them.

I am tempted to say that human rights, by their very nature, do away with the distinction traditionally drawn between the internal order and the international order. Human rights give rise to a new legal permeability. They should thus not be considered either from the viewpoint of absolute sovereignty or from the viewpoint of political intervention. On the contrary, it must be understood that human rights call for cooperation and coordination between States and international organizations.

In this context, the State should be the best guarantor of human rights. It is the State that the international community should principally entrust with ensuring the protection of individuals.

However, the issue of international action must be raised when States prove unworthy of this task, when they violate the fundamental principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and when - far from being protectors of individuals - they become tormentors.

For us, this problem is a constant challenge, particularly since the flow of information and the effect of world public opinion make the issues in question even more pressing.

In these circumstances, the international community must take over from the States that fail to fulfil their obligations. This is a legal and institutional construction that has nothing shocking about it and does not, in my view, harm our contemporary notion of sovereignty. For I am asking - I am asking us - whether a State has the right to expect absolute respect from the international community when it is tarnishing the noble concept of sovereignty by openly putting that concept to a use that is rejected by the conscience of the world and by the law! When sovereignty becomes the ultimate argument put forward by authoritarian regimes to support their undermining of the rights and freedoms of men, women and children, unbeknownst, - and I state this as a sober truth - such sovereignty is already condemned by history.

Moreover, I believe all members of the international community have an interest in international action being thus defined and directed. Nothing would be more detrimental to States themselves than to leave private associations, even if they are very motivated, to take sole responsibility for protecting human rights on the national level.

Yes, the States must be convinced that the control exercised by the international community ultimately is the one that provides the greatest respect for their sovereignty and spheres of competence.

The Vienna Conference has therefore rightly decided to evaluate methods and machinery for guaranteeing human rights with a view to improving them. It is indeed important that all of us here be aware of the changes that have taken place, where such forms of control are concerned, at the administrative and jurisdictional levels and in the operational sphere.

At the administrative level, the number of procedures for guaranteeing human rights has been increasing for years, not only within the United Nations but also at such specialized agencies as International Labour Organization or UNESCO and at such regional organizations as the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States.

Within the United Nations, a proliferation of bodies each entrusted with monitoring implementation of a specific convention can even be noted.

Generally speaking, the Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights must be accorded a special place.

The Centre, in particular, has undergone profound changes in recent years.

Initially intended to carry out studies and provide information on all aspects of human rights, the Centre has gradually been called on to contribute to the implementation of conventions, and to participate in ad hoc committees of special rapporteurs set up to investigate such wider-

ranging matters as summary executions, disappearances and instances of arbitrary detention.

However, guaranteeing human rights also means setting up jurisdictional controls to punish any violations that occur.

In this area, regional organizations have shown the way - particularly in the context of the Council for Europe, in the form of the European Court of Human Rights, and in the Americas, in the form of the Inter-American Court.

I would draw your attention in this connection to the current efforts by the United Nations to promote both a permanent international criminal court and a special international tribunal to prosecute the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia.

It was in February of this year that the Security Council decided to establish such a tribunal "for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991".

In asking the Secretary-General to consider this project, the Security Council has given itself an entirely new mandate. Upon my recommendation this Tribunal was set up on the 25th of May of this year. A decision of the Security Council taken on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter. This decision was adopted unanimously by the 15 members of the Security Council. This method makes it possible to set up the Tribunal immediately, because all of the States will take the necessary measures to implement a decision adopted in this manner.

Thus, the Security Council has created as a enforcement measure an organ, which is certainly a subsidiary organ within the meaning of Article 29 of the Charter, but which is an organ of a judicial nature. And this is considerable innovation.

I cannot discuss the development of measures taken by the Organization to safeguard human rights without mentioning the decisive action taken by the General Assembly in the area of humanitarian assistance.

Since December 1988, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/131 on humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations. The notion of a right to humanitarian assistance has, to a certain extent, become one of the areas in which human rights can be guaranteed.

We have seen this reflected in the Organization's operations in the Sudan, in Somalia, in the special case of Iraq and, today, in the former Yugoslavia.

Once again, these resolutions are not intended to justify some ostensible right of intervention, but simply to reflect one strong idea of the current efforts to safeguard human rights: namely the relationship between such guarantees and the economic imperative, which the international community is rightly embracing today.

The imperative of democratization is the last rule of conduct - and surely the most important - which should guide our discussion. There is a growing awareness of this imperative within the international community. The process of democratization cannot be separated, in my view, from the protection of human rights. More precisely, the democracy is the political framework in which human rights can best be safeguarded.

This is not merely a statement of principle, far less a concession to a fashion of the moment, but the realization that a democracy is the political system that best allows for the free exercise of individual rights. It is not possible to separate the United Nations promotion of human rights from the establishment of democratic systems within the international community.

Let me not be misunderstood nor unwittingly cause offence.

When, like so many others before me, I stress the imperative of democratization, I do not mean that some States should imitate others slavishly, nor do I expect them to borrow political systems that are alien to them, much less try to gratify certain Western States - in fact, just the opposite. Let us state, forcefully, that democracy is the private domain of no one. It can and ought to be assimilated to all cultures. It can take many forms in order to accommodate local realities more effectively. The democracy is not a model to copy from certain States, but a goal to be achieved by all peoples! It is the political expression of our common heritage. It is something to be shared by all. Thus, like human rights, democracy has a universal dimension.

We must all be convinced of that in order to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings, we must all agree that democratization must not be a source of concern to some but should be an inspiration for all States! In this spirit, the United Nations in its mission to guarantee human rights has an obligation to help States - often those that are the most disadvantaged - along the ever-difficult road to democratization.

This is why we must distance ourselves from sterile polemics and act constructively to build the link between development, democracy and human rights, a link we already recognize as inescapable.

One this is for sure that there can be no sustainable development without promoting democracy and, thus, without respect for human rights. We all know that, on occasion, undemocratic practices and authoritarian policies have marked the first steps taken by some countries along the road to development. Yet, we also know that if these States do not undertake democratic reforms once they have begun to experience the economic progress, they will ultimately achieve nothing more than disembodied growth, a source of greater inequity and, eventually, social unrest. Democracy alone can give development its true meaning.

This analysis must lead the developed countries to take an increasingly responsible attitude vis-a-vis developing States that are engaged in the democratization process. More than ever before, each one must realize its own responsibility in what is a joint undertaking. Each one must understand that development assistance contributes to the promotion of democracy and human rights. This in no way diminishes the overriding responsibility of all States, including developing countries, to promote democracy and human rights at home. The international community as whole is concerned as only the development of each State can ensure the peace for all of us!

Indeed, each passing day shows that authoritarian regimes are potential causes of war and the extent to which, in contrary, democracy is a guarantor of peace.

We have only to look at the mandates given to United Nations forces to see the connection, which the Organization is making, at the operational level and in the most concrete terms possible, between peacekeeping, the establishment of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights.

The mandate given to the United Nations operation in Namibia from April 1989 to March 1990 was an early but powerful demonstration of this evolution. Since 1991, a number of major operations have incorporated this political dimension of safeguarding of human rights and the restoration of democracy in their mission. We have seen this in the operations in Angola, Mozambique, El Salvador, Somalia and, of course, Cambodia.

Many States, in fact, know fully well desirable it is to receive the electoral assistance that they are requesting with increasing frequency from the United Nations.

In 1989, a mission was set up to monitor the electoral process in Nicaragua. The following year, a similar mission was set up in Haiti. Requests for electoral assistance continued to increase at a steady rate. The General Assembly endorsed the creation, within the Department of Political Affairs, of an electoral assistance unit, which became operational in April 1992.

Since then, equipped with this new tool, the United Nations has been better able to meet the requests for electoral assistance from many States: Argentina, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Uganda, Romania, Senegal, Seychelles, Chad, Togo ... the list is impressive.

Such requests fall into a variety of categories: the organization and holding of elections, their monitoring and verification, on-site coordination of international observers and with the many forms of technical assistance required for democratic elections to take place smoothly.

This is a major undertaking for the United Nations, and one whose magnitude must be stressed. We should not, however, blind ourselves to its limitations. The supervision and monitoring of elections do not in themselves constitute long-term guarantees of democratization and respect for human rights. This is borne out, unfortunately by the experiences of Angola and Haiti. The United Nations cannot guarantee that there will be enough of a sense of democracy for election results to be respected.

So, we have to do even more. We must help States change attitudes, persuade them to undertake structural reforms. The United Nations must be able to provide them with technical assistance that will allow them to adapt their institutions, educate their citizens, train leaders and set up regulatory mechanisms that respect democracy and reflect a concern for human rights. I am thinking specifically of how important it is to create independent systems for the administration of justice, to establish armies that respect the rule of law, to create a police force that safeguards public freedoms, and to set up systems for educating the population in human rights.

Yes, I am convinced that our task is nothing less than setting up civic education on a global scale.

Only by heightening the international community's awareness of human rights in this way and involving everyone in these efforts can we prevent future violations that our conscience rejects and the law condemns. Here, as elsewhere, preventive diplomacy is urgently needed. I expect that Vienna Conference come up with suggestions, with innovations and proposals to give increasing substance to this human rights diplomacy!

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Through these thoughts and illustrations, I hope I have shown that the United Nations has taken a decisive turn in its history. From now on, imperceptibly, our determination to respect human rights is now beginning to be reflected, through concrete and pragmatic efforts, in everything we do.

This has not been an important lesson for us. We must bear in mind throughout this Conference: the safeguarding of human rights is both a specific and a general goal. On the one hand, it requires us to identify increasingly specific rights and to devise increasingly effective guarantees. On the other hand, it also shows us that human rights permeate all activities of our Organization, of which they are, simultaneously, the very foundation and the supreme goal.

Allow me, then, by way of conclusion and at the outset of this Conference to make a final appeal:

May human rights create for us here a special climate of solidarity and responsibility!

May they serve to bind the Assembly of States and the human community!

May human rights become, finally, the common language of all humanity!

Thank you.

**BOUTROS-GHALI, Boutros (UN Secretary-General):**

I now invite the Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights, Doctor Ibrahima Fall, to address the World Conference.

**FALL, Ibrahima (Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights)**

*spoke in French:*

***Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING - HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION***

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Chancellor, Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Excellencies ladies and gentlemen Ministers and Heads of Delegation, ladies and gentlemen Eminent personalities and honorable guests, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen representatives of NGOs, ladies and gentlemen,

My function as Secretary-General of this conference means that I have the pleasant duty and the singular honor on behalf of the United Nations of thanking the people and the authorities of Austria for welcoming and holding this meeting in the prestigious city.

Indeed, Vienna is this high place imbued with rich and dynamic culture of the people whose history and art merge with the grandeur and power of Europe; and whose political determination, taken together with their moral enhancement, will have made it possible for these people to recover freedom and sovereignty as well as to ensure reconstruction and development. All this makes of Austria, once again, a haven for peace, prosperity and hospitality within the very heart of Europe.

Vienna is also the capital of major world meetings held for the peaceful settlement of international conflicts and for the harmonious regulation of diplomatic and consular relations and for the adoption of treaties and agreements, which are the very core of existing international law.

This strategic and historic choice of a city with a very long tradition of international conferences crowned with success is to be sure an auspicious choice to put forward, here and now, the outlines and the milestones of a future United Nations policy in respect of human rights. A policy that reflects the legitimate aspirations of all of those who throughout our globe place very much hope in the deliberations.

Another good omen for our meetings is the results of the preparatory work, which over the period of three years have mobilized Governments, intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, national institutions and academic communities at local, national, regional and international levels, and which have enriched the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee. All of this was done with the instigation of the previous Secretaries-General of the world conference. I am referring to my predecessors, Messrs. Jan Martenson and Antoine Blanca, to whom I would like to pay a special tribute.

This enormous process of the preparation of the conference culminated with the adoption by the Preparatory Committee at the beginning of May 1993 of the final draft document, which has been submitted with the document symbol A/CONF/157/PC/98.

Throughout this very long preparatory path leading up to the conference, several lessons can be drawn for immediate action and also for future action.

- The first lesson is a political lesson - the need to adopt an approach in terms of the United Nations action in the field of human rights that would be truly innovative. A novel approach based not on the utilization of human rights questions for political purposes associated with rivalries or solidarities of contingent interests and which induce double standard policies inherited from the Cold War and the subsequent effects of the Cold war. But rather an objective approach based on the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and which must translate in to a balanced attitude of vigilance and a balanced handling of all human rights violations regardless of where they occur.

This implies going beyond a change in mentality or behavior of Governments, a significant strengthening of the statute, competences, powers and resources of those bodies that are responsible for overseeing the respect of human rights with a view of increasing simultaneously their autonomy of action, effectiveness, speed and flexibility with which the initiatives can be undertaken as well as the credibility and the acceptability of their decisions.

This applies to treaty bodies made up of independent experts but who do not have the authority and the sufficient resources and means. It applies even more so to the bodies made up of Government representatives.

In this respect, the strengthening of the Commission on Human Rights, coming after the widening of its composition, is essential and urgent if we wish to make it possible for it to appropriately fulfill its mandate in general; in particular, the mandates of its rapporteurs, experts and representatives whom the Commission entrusted with investigation and assessment missions related to human rights situations and who often are simply not able to fulfill their missions either for the lack of resources or the lack the cooperation from the Governments under investigation.

Moreover, the introduction of a better balance between rapporteurs from the geographical point of view and in terms of sex, taken together with a better grasp of questions relating to women's rights in all of their dimensions and throughout the activities of the Commission and its

rapporteurs will contribute greatly to this objective and non-selective approach of the United Nations action in the area of human rights.

Finally, the very indivisibility of human rights requires that the economic social and cultural rights, the truly on equal footing with civil and legal rights, in particular by setting up a system of indicators to assess the progress reached in fulfilling these rights and by the elaboration and adoption of an optional protocol that would consecrate the rights to petition.

- The second lesson, which should be drawn from the preparatory process of this conference, is operational in nature. It stems from the fact that there was an absence or lack at the very least of strategies of coordination of policies and actions of various bodies and institutions in the United Nations family, which are all involved in the area of human rights. This is a situation, which leads to duplication, gaps and a lack of harmony, which has a detrimental effect on the meagre resources, human and financial as well as on the effectiveness of actions in the field.

Coming out of our deliberations, concrete steps should be implemented for a real policy of inter-institutional coordination of UN activities in the area of human rights. Here, the example we should actually follow comes from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which involves in a very coordinated way all of the relevant institutions of the United Nations when the Committee examines the situation of rights of the child in a given country. This example should be used as a cardinal principle for our action, both for each country and for each category of rights, in particular, the rights of women, indigenous populations, minorities, disabled and other vulnerable groups, but also in a global and integrated way for all of the strategies and policies of human rights throughout institutions in the United Nations System.

Once again, both the intrinsic nature of human rights and the necessary complementarity of our action as well as the most judicious use of our resources and the optimization of our efficiency and effectiveness, all support the generalization of this global and integrated approach.

This will require the setting up of a coordination mechanism at the highest level, which this conference, in my opinion, should require to be established.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The third lesson, which should be drawn from the preparatory process of this World Conference comes from strategy. We have to note that current mechanisms are not well adapted to the needs today, which are to be flexible, rapid, swift and effective, which are required by the frequency, seriousness and a massive nature of certain human rights violations and which are increasingly frequent and, moreover, go unpunished because there is a lack of appropriate structures and procedures.

On top of this general problem of the swift and effective management of massive violations of human rights comes the future dimension of a preventive management of potential crises. This requires even more so resorting to rapid warning techniques, preventive diplomacy, the early dealing with the deep-rooted causes that are potential sources of serious and massive violations of human rights.

The discussions within the Preparatory Committee make it clear that there are two schools of thought here: those in favor of simply improving the existing structures and the school of thought that is in favor simultaneously of improving the existing structures and mechanisms as well as establishing new mechanisms and structures. Neither the negotiations

during the last session of the Preparatory Committee nor the subsequent informal consultations did not come to a consensus on this point.

This means that our conference, in the choices that it will have to make, should take into consideration all of the advantages and drawbacks of each option, in the light of the present and future needs of the world. If we are not extremely careful there, we run the risk of succumbing into violence under the helpless gaze of inadequate mechanisms and procedures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The need to overcome the obstacles to and violations of the universal enjoyment of human rights is another goal that our deliberations should also cover. On this subject we should recommend some very specific steps, aside from the universal non-ratification of the main treaties and agreements related to human rights and/or the fact that they are not being respected, there is an exhaustive list of obstacles and violations to these rights and freedoms has been drawn up.

It is the very proof that this would not be sufficient to combat these evils. We have to, in fact, attack the very deep roots, both at the national level and the international level, whether we are talking about civil, political rights or economic, social, and cultural rights.

Along these lines, we have to recognize that without fundamental changes in the structure of social, economic and political relations, within States and also between States, it would appear difficult to overcome these obstacles and violations.

In our humble opinion, it is here that the democratization of these relations should play a very central fundamental role for the advent of a world of justice, peace and solidarity.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to briefly touch upon one last lesson that we can draw from this preparatory process: the critical question of the resources earmarked for human rights. Briefly, because here there is true unanimity among States, both in terms of acknowledging how modest the human, financial and other resources are, as well as the unanimity between the States on the fact that their quality should be increased. This comes interestingly on top of the standing disagreements in terms of the sources of financing for additional budgetary resources.

As far as I am concerned, I shall limit myself to simply recalling that the most dramatic and fiery proclamations that will come out of these meetings will have absolutely no effect on the real situation if they do not go hand in hand with sufficient resources, the sources of which are clearly indicated.

Moreover, one of the very characteristic features of the preparatory process, which is reflected in the final document submitted to you, is exactly the exponential growth in requests from States for technical assistance and advisory services in the area of human rights. These requests are related to preparation and organization of democracy, to setting up the operational basis for national institutions for promoting human rights, to establish research and documentation centers, to disseminate legal instruments at national level, to help in the area of human rights education, to build independent judicial power, legal support for populations and there are many others. These are requests that are not only important from a quantitative point of view for each country, but that they come from various countries and continents.

Finally, I would like to touch upon a question to which the preparatory process attached a special importance - the fate of the indigenous populations and peoples. The observation on the 17th of June of the

International Year, which is dedicated to them, will offer to their coordinator, myself, an opportunity to come back to this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we are to tackle so many questions during our meetings, we have to be very well organized.

On this subject, the respective functions of the various meetings covering our discussion will have to be understood in an integrated way. The plenary meeting should be an environment where we listen and exchange the current political concepts and the perspectives in terms of human rights from the point of view of our respective Governments. The Main Committee will tackle the same questions from a thematic, global vision and from a historical approach leading to practical options and recommendations from the States, from international organizations, from specialized agencies, from nongovernmental organizations, from treaty bodies and other experts in the area of human rights as well as from national institutions. Finally, as far as the Drafting Committee goes, its task will be to put in some integrated operational shape all of the proposals already made in the form of the programme of action of the United Nations in the area of human rights, giving us at the same time the political outlines, the chronological and institutional stages, the practical means, the financial and other resources necessary to implement the full realization of all human rights of men, women and people belonging to the vulnerable groups in a universal, objective, non-selective way and within a framework of international action based more on cooperation and not on confrontation.

Again, one last word:

As important as our work is I hope it will be very fruitful, the success of the Vienna conference will not be assessed based on the immediate results of our meeting, namely the recommendations that will come out of our deliberations. Not only on that. It will also be measured on the basis of our common political will to turn these recommendations into specific action. First of all, at the level of General Assembly at its next session, especially in the Third Committee for strategic and political options, and in the Fifth Committee for the financial and other resources that are imperative for implementing our recommendations.

It will be, in my opinion, necessary to integrate this future dimension within our work and we have to think in terms of very specific immediate follow-up measures and in the medium and long term for implementing our recommendations.

In addition, it would be extremely useful and practical to organize periodic meetings on annual basis, if possible, of those responsible for policy coordination in institutions and international organizations involved in human rights, as well as a meeting to evaluate in a general way the implementation of our recommendations around the year 2000 or in 1998 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this very noble undertaking to improve, strengthen and widen the cooperation and coordination of action for the promotion and protection of human rights, all of the competence and energy should be mobilized within a framework of a partnership based on trust and supported by the commitment of all in service of human rights and freedoms.

This is why, faced with the legitimate expectations of population throughout the world and the collective attention they should pay them, the Governments, treaty bodies, experts and rapporteurs, international

organizations - at the head of which is the United Nations - and regional organizations, the nongovernmental organizations. And I am pleased to say that they are very committed and I pay tribute to their commitment to human rights as well as their very active and positive participation throughout the preparatory process to the World Conference as well as their very obvious presence in our meeting. All of us should work together in a collective, permanent way to be able to face the present and future challenges of a new United Nations policy at the dawn of the new millennium.

Then and only then the symphony that we start building from today, will be a completed symphony. We will have deserved the inspiring melody of Mozart's *Magic Flute*.

I thank you.

#### BOUTROS-GHALI, Boutros (UN Secretary-General):

I thank Professor Ibrahim Fall for his important statement and I will now like to invite the Federal Chancellor of Austria His Excellency Dr. Franz Vranitzky to address the World Conference on Human Rights.

VRANITZKY, Franz (Austria): *spoke in German*

#### **Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS**

Prime Ministers, Your Excellencies, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

In a few months' time, we will be celebrating an anniversary, forty-five years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After the atrocities of World War One, this Declaration proclaimed new universal standards of morality and humanity and has been the most important guideline ever since for implementing human rights.

At the same time, we must state though that the actual realities in many parts of the world lag far behind the objectives of this Declaration.

I hope that this conference will not only contribute at the international level to raising the international awareness for questions of human rights, but also to strengthening their legally binding force.

The democratic States of Europe can rightly be proud of the fact that within the framework of the Council of Europe they have created instruments for the review and the enforceability of human rights standards. If individual citizens can now turn to a European Court of Human Rights for alleged or actual violations of their rights by their respective States, then I think that this is a very important achievement in line with the spirit of the universal validity of the human rights and going beyond the national sovereignty. It is my firm conviction that a democratic system affords the best protection of human rights.

Still democracy as such is not an automatic guarantee of equal rights for everyone. In this connection, I would like to refer to the problems of ethnic and other minorities, problems that are often not solved satisfactorily. This applies not only to the so-called new democracies.

Especially at times of economic recession, social developments are possible in European democracies, which constitute a threat to the universal validity of human rights. I am thinking here not only of xenophobic and racist trends that have reached the level of physical force/violence and

murder in recent times, but I am thinking here also of the increasing unemployment with its many material and psychological consequences.

Let us not forget either that in the very heart of Europe, only a few hundred kilometers from here, a cruel war is waged, disregarding human values or the most basic rules of humanitarianism and humanity no longer apply. Simply for that reason, people living in other countries cannot say that this is not their concern.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this connection, in connection with human rights and human rights in Western democracies, here I would like to warn you of self-complacency because implementing human rights is a continuous task, a continuous challenge that has to be taken up by every State, by every society and by every person with political responsibility. This is a challenge that nobody can or must escape although it is the responsibility of the international community of States to commit itself to the universal implementation of human rights, yet still this is a topic that does not lend itself to any political or ideological.

I would now like to use the next word in quotation marks "war fairing" mainly. Also, it does not help to play our various human rights against others, such as individual rights against social rights, or political freedoms against economic development.

The much used formula of the "indivisibility" of human rights means to me especially that we must understand them globally, comprehensively, that they include the classical civic freedoms and civil freedoms just as much as the freedom from hunger and needs or to put it in other words they include also the satisfaction of basic needs for all people.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates,

We in the so-called rich North, however, are also confronted with the fact that in spite of the basic indivisibility of the human rights they are given different priorities in different parts of the world on the specific social situations.

We are told, for example, if millions of people are threatened by famines then many human rights issues will be approached differently then it is the case in a Western prosperous society. To realize this, however, does not mean that one ought to abandon the imperative of universality. In other words, there is much work ahead of us in the community of States because it does not suffice to confess verbally the universality and indivisibility of human rights, while demanding it from others. Rather it is our global task and responsibility to create the prerequisites and the framework setting for the universal implementation of human rights. In other words, to fight hunger, need, unemployment, mass diseases, illiteracy, and to fight them at their very roots instead of accepting them as facts while still demanding smooth well behaving.

In the course of preparing the present conference, there were these political controversies on the definition and validity of human rights. In many cases, mention was made of a new North-South conflict; still I hope that in the next two weeks here in Vienna we will succeed in overcoming this controversy and to reach a constructive dialogue.

It is, however, also an essential component for a constructive dialogue and an essential component of the tradition of Vienna as a place of encounter that we are prepared to listen to everyone who speaks on behalf of those affected and not to show the door to anyone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The World Conference does not have the objective to implement viewpoints at the expense of others or to obtain political success in such a way. The objective of the World Conference is to improve the human rights situation, which means to improve the rights and living conditions of people throughout the world. The general agreement on this objective, which is the basis for convening this conference, should make it possible by way of dialogue and cooperation to reach practical and practicable results. Particularly in this spirit I would like to welcome you here on behalf of the Austrian Federal Government and I would like to wish you the best of success here at the World Conference.

***Agenda Item 2. Election of the President***

BOUTROS-GHALI, Boutros (UN Secretary-General):

***Keywords: ELECTION OF OFFICERS***

I thank His Excellency, the Federal Chancellor of Austria for his important statement, the Chief of the Protocol will now escort His Excellency, the Federal Chancellor, to his sit. The conference will now consider Item 2 of its provisional agenda « The election of the President ». I now have the honor to propose that the heads of the delegation of the host country, His Excellency, Alois Mock, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Austria, be elected President of the World Conference of human rights. If I hear no other nomination, it is so decided. I hereby declare His Excellency Mr. Alois Mock elected President of the World Conference on Human Rights by acclamation, and I ask the Chief of Protocol to escort him Chief Protocol. Chief of Protocol has disappeared.

***Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Conference***

***Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the rules of procedure***

***Agenda Item 4. Election of the other officers of the Conference***

***Agenda Item 5. Appointment of the Credential Committee***

***Agenda Item 6. Establishment of committees and working groups***

***Agenda Item 7. Adoption of the agenda***

MOCK, Alois (President of the World Conference on Human Rights):

***Keywords: HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT - CONFERENCES - RULES OF PROCEDURE - ELECTION OF OFFICERS - WORK ORGANIZATION***

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, May I at the very outset thank you all: the delegates to this conference, the representatives of the Governments attending for the confidence you have placed in me by electing me to the office of President of the Conference.

I do appreciate your trust and your good will and I am sure that I, in turn, will find new partners in our common endeavor to work together for the promotion, the protection and the further development of human rights.

I should like at this stage to pledge to you my full cooperation and the full cooperation of the host country to make this conference successful and meaningful. Indeed, this conference, perhaps like any other held in the past needs the unreserved cooperation of all Governments and all participants.

If we want to make it a new milestone in the development of human rights, if we are sincere in obtaining the goal of crafting a human rights agenda for the 21st century, then we shall have to give a new impetus to the idea that the human being, its needs and its rights, is at the root of each and every sovereign State and at the root of the collectivity of States known as the United Nations.

The human being is indeed unique; its dignity and worth do not depend on any outside authority. Human rights are not "bestowed" upon the individual by any state, social group or political party; they are part of man's very nature.

This undeniable truth has been proclaimed by different cultures and with a different wording at different times.

More than 1,300 years ago, the second Caliph, Omar, already asked his contemporaries: "Why have you turned men into slaves, if all of them were born free?"

Let me also recall two very similar quotations. One says that all living creatures ought to enjoy "security, ... impartiality and happiness." The other states that "all men are created equal and independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent and inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The latter of these two quotations is, of course, taken from Thomas Jefferson's famous original draft of the American Declaration of Independence. The first comes from an edict of the Indian emperor Ashoka who reigned over 2,200 years ago.

Ladies and gentlemen,

All this is proof, if proof were needed, that there is a commonly shared idea about the nature of men and his rights. Human rights are indeed universal in character. Today this is recognized more than ever before.

It is precisely the universal character of human rights, the fact that those rights transcend national borders in a common, precious part of all mankind, which has brought us together today, delegates of well over one hundred States, representatives of the world community at large.

We are, therefore, bound to make the universality of the human rights system our point of departure.

By accepting this point of departure, we are also bound to apply the same human rights "yardstick," whenever and wherever basic principles of humanity are in jeopardy. To my mind, the very concept of universality, in fact, excludes the application of dual standards.

Furthermore, we must also understand human rights in their widest possible sense. We shall only succeed in safeguarding human dignity if we do not limit ourselves to protecting men's political rights; we must also defend his economic, social and cultural rights.

In our days, man's right to pursue his "happiness" would probably have been called his "right to development." I am convinced that the individual will only be able to prosper and unfold if that basic right is also accepted and observed.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This universal and at the same time general understanding of human rights as well as the rejection of dual standards must form the basis of the work of this conference. It is also in this spirit that I conceive my role as

President. I call for your cooperation, so that we have attain through joint action and joint efforts the noble aims that the General Assembly had in mind when it decided to convene this conference.

The World Conference on Human Rights is admittedly the largest all-encompassing human rights event so far in the history of mankind. The entire community of nations is participating at the high level as requested by the General Assembly.

The various UN branches involved in human rights are present. The specialized agencies and regional organizations have dispatched representatives, the various mechanisms created by the United Nations are giving us their special input.

Numerous nongovernmental organizations and national institutions have also come to join this conference in order to make us realize what the peoples of the world expect from such a gathering - concrete steps forward in the realization of human rights.

This conference, as a worldwide event, is first of all designed to see that human rights become a living reality in every single country, that through common accord and joint action the root causes for continued violation of human rights eliminated, and that the community of nations collectively strive to respect the fundamental rights inherent in any human being.

What are those fundamental rights, which we are attempting to further and protect? The answer, on the surface, is easy: it is the rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights created by the United Nations during its first 20 years.

The first element of the International Bill, namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly without a dissenting vote, represents the recognition and realization of the Charter's promise that the peoples of the United Nations were indeed determined to reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of all men and women.

By the same token, the Universal Declaration is a living monument to the determination of the peoples to practice tolerance and to live together in peace with one another as good neighbors. Indeed, since the adoption of the Universal Declaration we have come to realize the interdependence and interrelationship of human rights and peace. Genuine peace within any nation and among nations can only be built on recognition of and respect for the inherent rights of the individual.

Where peace is broken human rights are always violated. Whenever human beings cease to practice tolerance towards each other, violence is the result. The human rights are violated on the larger scale - peace falls to pieces.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this connection, I should like to recall one important paragraph from the Vienna Declaration adopted by the International Christian-Islamic Conference "Peace for Humanity," which recently took place in Vienna.

In its Declaration, the Conference appealed to all Christians and Muslims to strive together, and with all people, for a more humane world, a world in which all can leave together in dignity, justice, mutual tolerance and peace, in which the wealth of our earth is distributed justly and in which tensions and conflicts are resolved in a spirit of dialogue with the resolute will for peace.

It is in this light of this that they have invited the Nobel Prize Peace Laureates for a private gathering so that those eminent personalities may analyze in more detail the delicate interrelationship between the maintenance of peace in the world and the observance of human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Following the adoption of the Universal Declaration, the United Nations went on to draft binding instruments on human rights. These are first and foremost the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, on the one hand and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the other.

The Covenants, the cornerstone of the human rights system created by the United Nations, were adopted in 1966 by consensus. Thus, they are the expression of the common will of all States in Governments: in other words, the Covenants do represent the conviction of mankind that every individual around the globe ought to be the beneficiary of the rights enumerated in these instruments.

It would be fallacious to argue that the concept of basic rights of the individual, as embodied in the Covenants, would not represent or would only partially represent ideas common to all mankind.

Ladies and gentlemen,

What we are called upon to achieve in the forthcoming two weeks is to strengthen and further improve this system, which let me again repeat it quite clearly is part and parcel of the objectives of the United Nations as conceived by the founding fathers.

The main task of our conference will accordingly be to strengthen and develop this system further. This task being confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/155, which in very broad terms invites us

- to review and assess the progress made in the field of human rights;
- to examine the relation between development and the enjoyment by everyone of all human rights as they are embodied in the Universal Declaration and both Covenants;
- to work for the improvement of the implementation of existing human rights standards and instruments;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of relevant United Nations methods and mechanisms and finally;
- to formulate the recommendations for improving the effectiveness of relevant United Nations activities and mechanisms.

A large part of our work will therefore be dealing with the United Nations. At the end of the 20th century and at the dawn of a new millennium, we must place the United Nations in a position of effective control as to the implementation and the further development of human rights.

In so doing we must bear in mind that all our actions have but one aim: to improve the situation of the individual in the world of today. After the many decades of East-West confrontation we have been granted the chance of a fresh beginning. At this historic turning point we must in particular take due account of individual human being and of his inherent rights and responsibilities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am aware, as you are, that violations of human rights which were witnessed on an almost daily basis in all parts of the globe, including the immediate neighborhood of Austria, are likely to occur also in the years to come.

For this very reason, I am also convinced that the credibility of this conference will, in the final outcome, not only depend on what has been said in this hall. It will be judged in accordance with its medium- and long-term consequences. In the long run, it is not declarations that count but implementation. It is not words that count, but deeds.

We must, therefore, pay tribute to those who are already actively involved in combating human rights violations. Very many people across the globe are making unbelievable sacrifices and are often even risking their lives or liberty in defense of those basic freedoms that are the common heritage of mankind. This conference ought to give these courageous men and women the support they deserve. This is our moral duty.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me once again appeal to you all for your cooperation in making this conference a successful and meaningful event in the history of the development of human rights. We owe this to our own peoples.

May the World Conference on Human Rights stand as a new milestone on which succeeding generations can build. To promote and protect human rights is a never-ending task. It will stay with each of us, it will stay with each and every Government, it will stay with the World Organization.

In the two weeks ahead of us, we must try to lay the groundwork for an improved approach to human rights. We will have to understand that the a consciousness of human rights is emerging. To give it the appropriate underpinning and infrastructure ought to be seen a major obligation.

Thank you very much.

I should like now to proceed to item 3 of the provisional agenda of the World Conference "Adoption of the Rules of Procedure".

The provisional of rules of procedure contained in document A/147/PC/45 approved by the General Assembly with the exception of Rule number 15 by its resolution 47/122 of the 2nd of December 1992.

In this connection I should like to draw the attention of the conference to document A/147/1 containing the annotations to the agenda of the conference, and in particular paragraph 4, giving the recommendation of the preparatory Committee to amend rule 6 and 11 of its provisional rules of procedure to take into account the composition of its General Committee.

Furthermore, the conference will recall that the senior officials in the course of informal consultations, which took place in Vienna from the 9th to the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1993 recommended that the General Committee should consist of 48 officers. Thus, the proposed new text for rules 6 and 11 are to be modified to reflect the change in the number of Vice-Presidents from 29 to 43 and to refer to only one main committee. If I see no objections, may I take it that the conference is prepared to adopt the recommended provisional rules of procedure recommended by the General Assembly duly modified in regard to rules 6 and 11.

If I see no objection, it is so decided.

The next item on the provisional agenda is item 4 "Election of other offices of the conference."

In accordance with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Conference on Human Rights, as adopted, the conference shall elect from among the representatives of participating States, the following offices in addition to the President: 43 Vice-Presidents, Rapporteur-General, a Chairman of its Main Committee, a Chairman of its Drafting Committee and a Chairman of its presidential Committee.

In keeping with Rule number 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Conference As adopted, the officers shall be elected in such a way as to ensure equitable geographical distribution in the General Committee The senior officials at the informal consultations recommended that the General Committee of the World Conference should be made up of 48 officers distributed as follows.

From African States - thirteen, from Asian States - eleven, from Eastern European State - six, from Latin America and Caribbean States - nine, from Western Europe and other states - nine.

In addition, the senior officials recommended that the officers shall be distributed as follows. President - he comes from Austria, the Chairman of the Main Committee, Mrs. Halima Embarek Warzazi (Morocco). Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Mr. Gilberto Vergne Saboia coming from Brazil. The Rapporteur-General of the World Conference on Human Rights Mr. Zdzislaw Kedzi, coming from Poland. and as I announced - forty-three Vice-Presidents.

May I take that the conference agrees to this composition of the General Committee.

So it is decided.

The President has been informed of the following designations for Vice-Presidents, for the group of Latin American and Caribbean States: Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

The President has also been informed of the following designations for Vice-Presidents for the group of Asian States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Philippines, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Yemen.

The following Vice-Presidents where designated from Eastern Europe: Croatia, the Federal Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, the Russian Federation, Romania.

For Western Europe the following Vice-Presidents have been nominated, this applies to the area of the Western Europe and others: Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America.

The conference will elect all the Vice-Presidents once the designation of all regional groups has been received, so I ask the remaining nominations from Africa to be forwarded as soon as possible this afternoon.

We shall now proceed to item 5 of the agenda "Appointment of the Credentials Committee."

In accordance with Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure, the Credentials Committee of 9 members shall be appointed at the beginning of the conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its most recent session.

Accordingly, I would propose that the following States appointed members of the Credentials Committee of the world conference: Argentina, Barbados, Benin, China, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Rwanda and the United States. If I hear no objection, I take that the conference agrees to the appointment of these States as members of the Credentials Committee. It is decided.

We now turn to item 6 of the provisional agenda "Establishment of committees and working groups."

As I have just stated, the senior officials at informal consultations recommended that the Conference establish one Main Committee to discuss

agenda item 9 to 12 composed of all conference participants and one Drafting Committee composed of all governmental delegations to the Conference.

Furthermore, the senior official recommended the following arrangement with regard to the participation of nongovernmental organizations in the conference in conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the conference. Plenary and Main Committee: in conformity with the relevant rules of the procedure of the conference, oral interventions by representatives of NGOs shall be made in the plenary and in the Main Committee of the Conference taking into account efficient high management, the thematic parameters, and the provisional agenda of the conference.

Drafting Committee - in conformity with the relevant rules of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference an oral presentation to the Drafting Committee in formal session shall be made by the representatives of NGOs at the beginning of the work of the Drafting Committee and questions related to the draft final document of the World Conference. Further representation shall take place as appropriate, while the drafting among governmental delegations continues taking into account efficient time management, the thematic parameters and the provisional agenda of the Drafting Committee.

If I see no objection, I take it that this proposal is adopted.

It is so decided.

In this context, I will as soon as possible contact the NGOs.

I also understand that a meeting of senior officials took its decision by consensus and I was told that consensus will be the working basis for this conference.

We now proceed to agenda item 7 "Adoption of the agenda".

The provisional agenda is contained in document A/CONF/157/1 which has been approved by the General Assembly.

If I see no objection, I think that the proposed provisional agenda is adopted.

It is so decided.

We now proceed to the general debate on the substantive items of the agenda, namely items number 9, 10, 11 and 12. It is the understanding of President that these items are to be discussed collectively taking into account the need for efficient high management. Delegations are, therefore, requested to make not more than one statement, not think if it is possible, ten minutes in the course of this general debate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With this communication, the first meeting of the World Conference on Human Rights is adjourned. We will reconvene at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in this room.