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enough in making what we have work better. I am encouraged by the pragmatic direction that the debate on reform of the international financial system has taken. The Commonwealth Study Group's report on Challenges for the World's Financial and Trading System represents a most useful recent contribution to this debate. Many of its recommendations are aimed, in the first instance, at bringing about greater multilateral co-operation within the perimeters of the present institutional system.

The same concern — to make existing institutions work better — has prompted the efforts by my country within the UNDP [United Nations Development Program] Governing Council to achieve a more assured system of funding for that institution, and to reinforce its role as a central fund for all UN technical assistance activities for development. We likewise attach importance to the current triennial review of the operational development activities of the UN system. This review provides an opportunity to reassert a coherent sense of purpose and direction to practical co-operation between North and South.

I have emphasized the most difficult issues of peace and security and economic co-operation. We should, however, balance our natural concern with these problem areas by recognizing and publicizing the ongoing achievements of the UN system. Too often, these are taken for granted. To cite a few examples:

— First, the UN specialized agencies continue to spearhead international co-operation in many vital technical areas. The International Civil Aviation Organization is the most recent case in point. It is important for us to ensure that the specialized agencies succeed in preventing extraneous political issues from diverting them from their principal tasks.

— Second, slow but steady progress has been made, since the approval of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, toward the creation of a body of international treaties, mechanisms and procedures which should eventually cover all flagrant violations of human rights. No government can claim any longer that human rights abuses are solely within their domestic jurisdiction. The UN's work in human rights goes hand-in-hand with its efforts in the co-ordination of humanitarian assistance to refugees and in the case of natural or man-made disasters. We agree with the Secretary-General that the "individual human being" is "the ultimate *raison d'être* for all our activities".

— Third, the UN system remains in the vanguard of the progressive development of international law. Pioneering legal regimes have been established in crucial fields — such as law of the sea, outer space, civil aviation, telecommunications, and trade. If the system, however, is going to keep pace with new developments and technologies, legal considerations will have to take precedence over political objectives.

— And fourth, the UN system is also actively facilitating international co-operation to come to grips with the most persistent problems facing society. One innovative proposal, which will be considered by the General Assembly at this session, is for the establishment of an international commission on the environment. The commission would address one of the major challenges facing the international community by studying the impact of economic and social development on the world's environment up to and beyond the year 2000.

If the UN system is to deal effectively with the panoply of current issues, we the member states must

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