

During the past few months, and the past few weeks, the members of the Commonwealth have anxiously and closely followed the developments in Rhodesia. The United Nations, for its part, has taken important, even historic, decisions.

The fact is, however, that the actions taken by the international community have so far failed to end the illegal régime. I am well aware that there are many who feel that in these circumstances the best answer is armed force. My Government has deep misgivings, however, about such an answer. Would the use of force achieve the results we desire? If not, might it not hurt those whom it was designed to help? This is the kind of question we must ask ourselves. We believe that we should concentrate on seeing that the measures now in operation are applied with maximum effectiveness and that they are strengthened and supplemented in areas where this is practical, so that constitutional government can be restored and independence on the basis of majority rule attained.

The communiqué of the Commonwealth prime ministers' meeting notes a British willingness to co-sponsor in the Security Council a resolution for effective and selective mandatory economic sanctions against Rhodesia before the end of this year, if the illegal situation has not ended by then, and gives full Commonwealth support for such a Security Council resolution. We think such a resolution would indeed be desirable, since we have noted that, although most governments are supporting fully the measures advocated in Security Council resolutions, there have been some instances where this is not the case. My Government is particularly concerned by the fact that some markets are still open to Rhodesian exports, especially minerals and tobacco.

At the forefront of the problems before this session is the question of South West Africa. Since the recent judgement of the International Court was not concerned with the substantive aspects of this question, it does not in any way invalidate previous advisory opinions on the accountability of South Africa to the international community. My Delegation is studying the various aspects of the problem with close attention and will indicate its position on whatever proposals are made as the debate on South West Africa progresses. An important concern of my Delegation will be the possibility of these proposals achieving their stated objectives.

The balance-sheet of our achievements is written each year in this debate. I have tried today -- too long I am afraid, however -- to show several areas of endeavour which demand particular attention if the United Nations is to develop into a potent force for peace in the world. But I suggest that our collective experience has revealed a number of useful lessons.

In the first place, it is clear that we must not allow great-power differences over certain admittedly very difficult issues to induce a fruitless passivity in the membership. We must continue to search for opportunities for initiatives which are both constructive and realistic.

Secondly, there is an evident need for the Assembly to re-establish the free processes of debate and negotiation on draft resolutions. Only in this way can we hope to promote agreements that will attract the meaningful support of member governments when it comes to implementation.