

The recent law of the sea experience is instructive in two different respects. First, it has demonstrated that serious negotiations, carried on within a sensible, practical framework, can resolve difficult questions involving deep changes in approach to issues where the willingness to do so exists. Second, it demonstrates, in perhaps the most cogent possible way, that no institution, no matter how well conceived or well administered, can function in the absence of agreement on such a fundamental question as adhering to the principle of consensus.

Mr. President, I have spoken about change in the international system and I have tried to underline our collective responsibility to ensure that the forces of change lead in positive directions. This Assembly is itself a symbol of change in the world. Three times as large as it was 30 years ago, with quite different emphases in its work, it needs now to set its imperatives against the ideals identified in the Charter. Although the Charter was drawn up in the absence of most countries represented here, I am sure that those ideals still represent a valid framework for our endeavour. Indeed, they are constants in a sea of change. I urge our rededication to them.