

maritime security measures and to improve the awareness and implementation of IMO standards.

32. In response to a growing international desire for closer cooperation, we will strengthen and expand international cooperation and consultation, and reach out bilaterally and multilaterally, on counterterrorism issues. In this regard we welcomed the initiative by Japan to convene a Seminar on Counterterrorism for the Asia and Pacific Region in December, 1996.

UN Reform

33. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving early and practical results in the renewal of the United Nations. We welcome the momentum that has developed over the past two years in favor of substantial reform of the United Nations system in all the major activities of the United Nations. Secretary General Kofi Annan has seized the initiative and generated a renewed commitment to revitalizing the entire organization. Significant efforts are now underway in the UN Secretariat, ECOSOC and its subsidiaries, the high-level intergovernmental working groups on organizational strengthening and financial stabilization, UNCTAD, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the operational programs for development and humanitarian relief.
34. Credit for the progress achieved so far is widely shared. We have been pleased to join with all our fellow members of the United Nations in responding to the broadly recognized needs for enhancement and improvement of the organization and its associated agencies and programs. Our concerted efforts have clearly marked out the course to take in increasing the UN system's programmatic efficiency and cost effectiveness.
35. We anticipate the timely conclusion of the various working groups and the prompt implementation of responsive measures during the next UN biennium, 1998-99. Such action will ensure that the United Nations is fully able to meet the challenges of the new century as the premier international organization responsible for peace, security and the promotion of human welfare and sustainable development in all its aspects.

We call on all member States to join us in redoubling efforts to achieve these vital outcomes.

Political Situations

Democratic Republic of the Congo

36. The momentous changes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlight the importance of peaceful democratic transition and the establishment of a broadly-based interim administration. We believe it is important to assist the new authorities in the transition to an elected government, promote respect for human rights, address urgent humanitarian needs, and facilitate economic renewal. We look forward to close cooperation with other donor