

dissolving, we must not invent new economic blocs to divide us once again.

Human Rights, Women's Equality and Children's Rights

Over the past year, Mr. President, we have seen remarkable progress in the area of human rights. For example, South Africa has taken important steps toward dismantling apartheid and constructing a non-racial democracy. Much, however, remains to be done. The 1993 World Conference should become a focal point for enhancing international efforts to promote a universal culture of human rights. As we approach this conference, we must ask how the UN Centre for Human Rights in Geneva can become a more vigorous and vocal watchdog for human rights. Given the priority we attach to human rights as one of the three primary objectives of the Charter, we must build the institutional capabilities of the UN system so that it can perform its functions effectively. The discrepancy between our goals in the human rights field and the modest means at the disposal of the Secretary-General is becoming increasingly anomalous.

Events of recent months have also focussed increased and deserved attention on democratic institutions. We all applaud those countries that have held free and fair elections in the past year. But democracy is more than an electoral process. It is a way of thinking, and it requires institutional support, including a free press and the vigilant protection of an independent judiciary. At this session of the General Assembly, we intend to pursue a resolution on the independence of the judiciary.

The United Nations must also intensify its work to achieve equality for women. Although the UN has taken some important steps to promote gender equality since the proclamation of the International Women's Year and the UN Decade for Women, the majority of the world's women still lag far behind men in power, wealth and opportunity.

By its own actions and in its own operations, the United Nations must provide leadership on all issues of women's equality. A long overdue step would be to ensure the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat by appointing more women to senior positions.

Greater energy and vigour must be brought to bear in the implementation of forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women, including programs designed to improve literacy. Efforts to ensure that women participate fully in the development process must be pursued. Beyond considerations of social justice and equity, it is time that we realized that no nation can be fully developed until all of its citizens have not only the