Tenth special session
Agenda item 8

GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 13 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ambassador of Chile to the United Nations, Mr. Sergio Díez Urzua, has addressed to you a final letter (A/S-10/19) concerning the controversy which his delegation has provoked at the tenth special session of the General Assembly.

My delegation has renounced all polemical intentions and, with a view to making, in its turn, its final statement concerning information which is a matter of historical record, draws your attention to the following facts and requests that this letter be circulated as a document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 8:

1. Bolivia has undeniable historical rights and can also cite the rights proclaimed by the international community concerning the need to contribute to the gradual elimination of all factors of dependence and other limitations resulting in drawbacks which are contrary to solidarity and detrimental to certain nations which, like my own, have long suffered from a suffocating land-locked situation.

2. It is also unrealistic to state that Bolivia enjoys transit facilities which are such that - contrarily - it does not need a sovereign outlet to the Pacific Ocean. The evidence to this effect includes the report of the United Nations Development Programme of 13 April 1978, an official United Nations document, which states: "Access to Bolivia by land is difficult, even in comparison with many other land-locked countries. This presents the country with particularly acute trade and transit problems" (DP/328, para. 19). The limitations unilaterally imposed by Chile on Bolivia's right of transit resulted in that right being denied in practice when it was eliminated with regard to freight and when, in addition, Chile imposed unilateral increases, such as the recent 50 per cent increase on freight carried by rail between Ollague and Antofagasta.
3. It was the delegation of Chile and not that of Bolivia which raised the problem before the international community on the afternoon of 26 May, making the following two basic contradictory statements, among others:

(a) It stated that the problem is solely binational, but finally acknowledged, contradictorily, that it is trinational and hence international in scope;

(b) After mentioning an acceptance of exchange "in general terms" it finally and contradictorily referred to "explicit acceptance" by Bolivia (first paragraph of the reply by the Chilean delegation on 30 May (A/S-10/PV.9, p. 101) and the end of paragraph 5 of the letter of 5 June addressed to the Secretary-General). Bolivia has never specifically committed itself to the exchange of territory. It accepted a "global basis for negotiation" through an exchange of documents. There is semantic confusion between the agreement to negotiate and the acceptance of negotiation itself, in concrete terms.

Bolivia attaches overriding importance to the faithful observance of the United Nations Charter and to world peace and security. Consequently it always welcomes the possibility of constructive dialogue. Its firmly pacifist position and its faithful solidarity as regards the development of its neighbours constitute a practical application, at the regional level, of the most noble aims of this tenth special session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Mario MOLON ANAYA
Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the United Nations