



# General Assembly

Sixty-second session

**74**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Monday, 17 December 2007, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Official Records*

*President:* Mr. Kerim . . . . . (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

## Agenda item 49 (continued)

### Culture of peace

#### Draft resolutions (A/62/L.6 and A/62/L.17/Rev.1)

**The President:** Members will recall that the Assembly held the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, under this agenda item, at its 17th, 18th and 19th plenary meetings, on 4 and 5 October 2007, and that it held a debate at its 39th plenary meeting, on 30 October 2007.

Draft resolution A/62/L.6 has already been introduced.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1.

**Mr. Davide** (Philippines): On behalf of the main sponsors, Pakistan and the Philippines, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace". For the record, the following countries are also sponsors as of noon on 14 December: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, the Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, the Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liberia, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan. The Secretariat will announce shortly any additional sponsors.

As an update of resolution 61/221, bearing the same title, the draft resolution revisits three operational provisions of resolution 61/221.

First, it welcomes the designation by the Secretary-General of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as a focal point in the Secretariat to assist the Secretary-General in coordinating the contribution of the United Nations system entities to the intergovernmental process of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and looks forward to its effective functioning.

Secondly, it emphasizes the need to sustain the momentum generated by the High-level Dialogue of 4 and 5 October 2007 on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace in subsequent discussions.

Thirdly, it decides to declare the year 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and to recommend the organization during that year of appropriate events on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace,

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



including, inter alia, a high-level dialogue and/or informal interactive hearings with civil society. This was recommended by the recent General Conference of UNESCO. The sponsors will submit to the General Assembly at the next session a modalities resolution to implement the International Year. The other operative paragraphs of the draft resolution are equally important.

Draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1 has been the subject of a series of informal consultations. At this point, allow me to convey my gratitude and that of the sponsors for the constructive contributions in enriching the text of the draft resolution. We are equally grateful to other delegations for their exemplary flexibility and accommodation that made it possible to have a consensus text for our approval today.

On behalf of the sponsors, I commend the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

Finally, allow me to extend to all of my dear colleagues my best wishes that they be lavished with the season's message of faith, love, peace, selfless service and hope and a New Year for a world filled with this message.

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/62/L.6 and A/62/L.17/Rev.1.

The Assembly will first take action on draft resolution A/62/L.6, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.6?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.6 was adopted (resolution 62/89).*

**The President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 62/90).*

**The President:** We will now hear two general statements following adoption of the resolutions.

**Mr. Lemos Godinho** (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The European Union has joined the consensus on resolution 62/90 and would like to thank the main sponsors for their flexibility in addressing the concerns of delegations in the revised text.

The European Union understands the purpose of this resolution as an affirmation of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace. The European Union also sees this resolution as an expression of commitment, since genuine interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace can only take place if human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully protected and promoted.

The European Union is in full agreement that the promotion of dialogue and understanding among cultures is essential to building a more peaceful world. For that reason, the European Union supported the decision at the recent General Conference of UNESCO to recommend to the General Assembly the proclamation of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

However, the European Union would like to recall that the existing Economic and Social Council guidelines for the consideration of international years — which we reaffirmed last year by adopting resolution 61/185 — set out that, prior to their consideration by the General Assembly, proposals for international years made by organizations within the United Nations system should first be brought to the attention of the Council to enable it to advise on their timing and to evaluate their purpose. The EU believes it important that the clear mandate of the Council in that regard should be respected, and we regret that it has not been so in this case.

It is our hope that, despite this, we will use the two years we have until 2010 to properly prepare, under the active guidance of UNESCO, the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures so that it can make a real difference and achieve its objective of bringing different cultures together.

**Mr. Rogachev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the adoption of the resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, of which the Russian Federation was a sponsor. This

resolution marks a new step in strengthening constructive interaction among civilizations.

The universal nature of the United Nations dictates the need to take into account spiritual traditions and the diversity of global cultures and religions. That is demonstrated by successful cooperation in the framework of such formats as the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, the Alliance of Civilizations, the Dialogue of Civilizations forum held on the Island of Rhodes and others. The Assembly's High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, which took place during the present session, on 4 and 5 October, demonstrated the need for such a form of interaction among States, religions and civil society. That positive experience should be both supported, reproduced and more vigorously developed.

Dialogue has become the source for a number of constructive initiatives, making use of the potential of the United Nations in strengthening interreligious peace as a condition for the implementation of the primary goals of the Organization: global security, development and respect for human rights. The impetus provided by the High-level Dialogue must be used to further the Organization's practical activity in that area, and the resolution just adopted creates a good foundation for this.

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 49?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 71 (continued)**

#### **Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

##### **Draft resolution (A/62/L.38)**

##### **(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

##### **Draft resolutions (A/62/L.30, A/62/L.34 and A/62/L.37)**

##### **(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions**

#### **(c) Assistance to the Palestinian people**

##### **Draft resolution (A/62/L.36)**

#### **Agenda item 72 (continued)**

#### **Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence**

##### **Draft resolution (A/62/L.26/Rev.1)**

**The President:** Members will recall that the Assembly already held a joint debate on agenda item 71 and its sub-items, together with agenda item 72, at its 53rd to 55th plenary meetings, held on 19 and 20 November 2007, and has adopted a resolution under sub-item (d) of agenda item 71.

In connection with agenda item 71 and its sub-items (a) and (c), I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.30.

**Mr. Petranto** (Indonesia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the tsunami-affected countries, the draft resolution contained in document A/62/L.30, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster".

Natural disasters have become a global issue due to the serious damage suffered by countries around the world each year. They have threatened human life by bringing about socio-economic disorder and have caused actual loss of life and damage of property. There is wide recognition that the poor in developing countries are most vulnerable to natural disasters; they tend to suffer heavily and to be displaced by such disasters.

The disaster caused by the major earthquake off the coast of Sumatra and the resulting tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 led to unprecedented human and physical damage to the countries in the area of the earthquake and far away. The vast majority of the thousands killed were in impoverished fishing and farming communities near the coasts.

While each country has the primary responsibility for its own people, the terrible events of the tsunami, as in other disasters before it, brought out the best in the human spirit of solidarity and struggle. It is that unconquerable spirit that has enabled us to overcome nature's obstacles time and again in history through mutual help and partnership. With international

support, we are working hard to help the survivors get back on their feet. We are making progress, but recovery is going to take years.

Against that background, draft resolution A/62/L.30 updates General Assembly resolution 61/132 of 14 December 2006. The text of this year's resolution is similar, apart from its taking into account the recent developments and lessons learned during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase in the affected countries.

The key actions in the resolution include, first, maintaining a long-term perspective on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas, for tsunami-affected countries, although facing different recovery timetables, still share the common challenge of long-term recovery. Secondly, preventive measures are essential for the affected communities, particularly with regard to improving the quality of and strengthening local capacity to respond to tsunami warnings. As part of that effort, building national capacity in the context of creating a reliable early warning system in the region is also crucial. Thirdly, early warning systems must be continually evaluated and strengthened. Fourthly, close coordination must be continually promoted so as to improve the effectiveness of disaster response and recovery. A fifth area is the promotion of transparency and accountability among donors and recipient countries.

Before taking action on the draft resolution, permit my delegation to note some editorial errors that require oral corrections. First, in the last line of operative paragraph 12, replace "for assessing and monitoring" with "to assess and monitor". Secondly, in operative paragraph 13, insert "UNESCO", immediately before "Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission" and, in the penultimate line, replace "towards developing" with "for developing". Lastly, in operative paragraph 16, replace "opportunities for women" with "every opportunity for women".

As of Friday, 141 countries had joined in co-sponsoring this draft resolution. Permit me to express, on behalf of the affected countries, our sincere thanks to all the Member States that have shown interest in and given their support to this draft resolution. We truly hope it can be adopted by consensus.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.34.

**Mr. Amil (Pakistan):** On behalf of the Group of 77 and China as well as the other sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development", contained in document A/62/L.34.

Successive reports of the Secretary-General on humanitarian issues indicate an alarming increase in the number and scale of natural disasters over the past decade, particularly in the developing countries. The poverty/disaster interface has the potential for immense suffering and loss. Natural disasters not only have an adverse impact on the economic and social development of the vulnerable, especially the poor, but also impede progress towards development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although it may not be possible to completely eliminate the suffering caused by natural disasters, commitment to enhancing preparedness and response capacity could help in the early recovery and long-term rehabilitation of those affected by such disasters.

It is in this backdrop that the G-77 and China has again tabled this resolution, which requires the continued attention of the international community to this important issue.

Strengthening disaster preparedness, response and early recovery efforts to mitigate and minimize the impact of natural disasters is one of main objectives of draft resolution A/62/L.34. In this context, the G-77 and China wish to highlight that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. At the same time, it is important to strengthen international cooperation, especially through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms in the provision of humanitarian assistance during all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development.

The resolution also recognizes the role information and telecommunication technology can play in disaster response, and encourages the international community to assist the efforts of developing countries to enhance their capacity in this regard.

The resolution is also mindful of the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies. Welcoming the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund, the resolution also calls for mobilization of adequate, flexible and sustainable resources for the recovery activities.

On behalf of the G-77 and China, I wish to thank all those Member States that have sponsored this important resolution in order to express their commitment to strengthening international cooperation in responding to the challenges of relief and early recovery. In particular, I would like to thank Mrs. Ruchi Ghanashyam of the Indian delegation, who facilitated the consultations. I hope that as in the past, the Assembly will adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal to introduce draft resolutions A/62/L.36 and A/62/L.38.

**Mr. Lemos Godinho (Portugal):** Allow me at the outset to express my sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives last week in the tragic events in Algiers.

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the European Union, to introduce draft resolutions A/62/L.38, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", and A/62/L.36, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

Humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel conducting operations in the field provide an invaluable service to millions of people in need, often at great personal risk. The deeply disturbing information on deaths and injuries and on harassment against those personnel, as well as the fact that the perpetrators of such acts of violence seemingly operate with impunity, clearly demonstrates that this issue deserves our urgent attention.

The draft resolution before us addresses both the issues of strengthening the normative framework for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel and efforts to promote and enhance the security management system of the United Nations.

On the normative framework, the draft resolution calls upon all States to consider becoming parties to

and to respect fully their obligations under the relevant international instruments, mindful of the need to promote the universality of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Optional Protocol to the Convention is a very important step forward in the protection of United Nations and associated personnel. The draft resolution calls upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol as soon as possible, and urges States parties to put in place appropriate national legislation, as necessary, to enable the effective implementation of the Optional Protocol.

The draft resolution also recommends that the Secretary-General continue to seek the inclusion of, and that host countries include, key provisions of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, among others, in the host country agreements and other related agreements concluded between the United Nations and those countries.

Importantly, the draft resolution reaffirms the need to hold accountable those responsible for all threats and acts of violence against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, and urges States to end impunity for such acts.

Secondly, the draft resolution acknowledges the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to further enhance the security management system of the United Nations, recognizing the important work of the Department of Safety and Security. The draft resolution recognizes the need for continued efforts to enhance coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and other relevant organizations to address mutual security concerns in the field. The draft resolution also invites the United Nations and, as appropriate, other humanitarian organizations, working closely with host States, to further strengthen the analysis of threats to the safety and security of their personnel. The draft resolution also highlights the importance of information on the range and scope of security incidents involving humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel.

In addition, the draft resolution addresses the importance of providing to humanitarian and United Nations staff adequate information and training on security, and encourages collaborative initiatives to address security training needs.

Recalling the essential role of telecommunication resources, the draft resolution also addresses the issue of limiting and, whenever possible, lifting the restrictions placed on the use of communications equipment by United Nations and associated personnel.

The increasing dangers faced by both international and national staff involved in humanitarian and United Nations operations underlines the urgency of the need for further measures to reinforce their safety and security. It is our sincere hope that this draft resolution will contribute to wider efforts to provide the necessary security and protection required for humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel in assisting those in need.

Finally, I would like to thank all interested delegations for their engagement on the text in the informal consultations. My delegation and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/62/L.38 will be adopted by consensus.

I will now turn to draft resolution A/62/L.36, which is entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". The European Union reiterates its commitment to the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people. Sustained donor support from the international community, working with the parties, is crucial for an improvement of the Palestinian economic and social infrastructure and to address the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. For its part, the European Union has been consistently increasing its assistance. The overall European Union assistance to the Palestinian people, including humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance, as well as contributions to the temporary international mechanism, will this year exceed €900 million, which represents an important increase from last year, and again makes us the single biggest donor.

The European Union remains determined to support the ongoing negotiation process between the parties launched at Annapolis and stands ready to work closely with the Palestinian Authority, the Quartet and regional partners to contribute to the Palestinian economy's revival and development. The European Union recently adopted an action strategy in order to adapt and enhance its activities in areas such as security, law and order, institution-building, good governance, civil society contributions and support for the Palestinian economy, in order to foster a new, substantive and credible peace process.

We would also like to underline the importance of the role of the Quartet Representative, Mr. Tony Blair, and to welcome the work already done, in particular the recent announcement of a number of quick-impact projects.

The European Union, however, remains gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and calls for the opening of crossings for both humanitarian reasons and commercial flows. We welcome the recent opening of a crossing for the export of agricultural goods as an important first step.

Today, the international donors are meeting in Paris in a conference that represents an essential building block of the political process launched at Annapolis and constitutes a unique opportunity for the international community to back up its commitment to assist in the economic and financial development of a future viable and prosperous Palestinian State. The European Union again demonstrated its support to the Palestinian people today, pledging the sum of €440 million for the year 2008.

I would to express our gratitude to the delegations that requested to be included in the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/62/L.36. The European Union and our fellow sponsors hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. We would also like to thank the Palestinian and Israeli delegations for their cooperation during the negotiations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.37.

**Mr. Lidén** (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, contained in document A/62/L.37.

My delegation is pleased that, through a series of informal consultations, we managed to reach consensus on this important draft resolution. We would like to thank all delegations for the good and constructive spirit of cooperation and partnership in which the consultations were held.

I should like to announce that, since the draft resolution was submitted, the following countries have become sponsors: Angola, Australia, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Timor-Leste and the United States of America.

This draft resolution reaffirms the unique and leading role that the United Nations has to play in humanitarian emergencies. Since the origin of resolutions on this matter, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in 1991, the emergency response capacity of the United Nations has been strengthened considerably. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the mechanisms for interagency coordination have enhanced coordination in assistance, and the operational agencies of the United Nations have improved rapid and effective response in the area of humanitarian relief.

At the same time, significant challenges remain. As demands grow, the humanitarian system needs to further improve its capacity and to have adequate and timely resources with which to respond. It is important to further enhance respect for humanitarian principles and to better understand the role of humanitarian assistance in support of Governments and their populations.

As in previous years, this draft resolution addresses issues related to efforts to strengthen international humanitarian response, as well as issues related to the principles of humanitarian protection and assistance.

Noting with grave concern the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, this year's draft resolution has a particular focus on disaster risk reduction and preparedness. In that regard, the draft reaffirms the importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action and calls upon the international community to increase resources to reduce the risks of disasters. It also encourages the international community to support efforts aimed at strengthening the capacity to respond to disasters, as well as to integrate disaster risk reduction into humanitarian assistance and development activities.

I would like to highlight the fact that the draft reaffirms the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance. It also calls upon Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to cooperate fully with the United Nations

and other humanitarian agencies and organizations to ensure safe and unhindered access to affected populations.

The draft resolution once again expresses the General Assembly's grave concern at violence deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations. It calls upon States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence against civilian populations, and it invites States to promote a culture of protection.

Two years ago, Member States decided to upgrade the Central Emergency Revolving Fund into the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the context of resolution 60/124, on this item. Sweden was an early believer in the Fund, but few could have predicted its enormous success. Last week, 74 countries pledged a total amount of almost \$420 million for humanitarian assistance in 2008. The present draft resolution reaffirms the funding target of \$500 million by 2008 and urges all Member States to consider contributions to the CERF. The draft resolution further welcomes the progress made by the Secretary-General in setting up appropriate monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms. In next year's consultations, we look forward to the independent review of the CERF that has been commissioned and to ensuring the Fund's continued success.

My delegation and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/62/L.37 will, like previous texts on this item, be adopted by consensus.

**The President:** In connection with agenda item 72, I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1.

**Mr. Outlule** (Botswana): On behalf of the main sponsors and the African Group, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1. I am also pleased to inform the General Assembly that Estonia and Portugal have joined the list of sponsors. We would be delighted to welcome other Member States as sponsors of the draft resolution.

The African Group is deeply grateful to all Member States for their constructive spirit and their cooperation and flexibility throughout the negotiations on this draft resolution.

Since 2004, a draft resolution on assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence, has been submitted by the African Group for adoption by the General Assembly. We strongly call for the adoption of the draft resolution before us and for its rapid implementation.

The draft resolution addresses a haemorrhage unprecedented in the history of humanity. It calls upon us not only to bow before the memory of millions of victims, but also to engage in practical ways to alleviate the suffering of the survivors. It reminds us of our everlasting responsibility to keep away the shadow of genocide and to help communities look forward to the future.

“Never again!” Those are the words pronounced on 7 April 2007 during the commemoration of the thirteenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide at African Union headquarters, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. “Never again!” “Never again!” We have the responsibility to say it today and every day. There is no excuse for genocide. Whatever assistance we intend to provide to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda will never be sufficient. It will never replace those who perished; it will never remove from our memory that unimaginable atrocity. But it is necessary to act to honour the memory of those who died, by helping those who survived to continue to believe in life and humanity, to tell the story of the horrors they witnessed and to help build communities that believe in tolerance. We here reaffirm our compassion and solidarity with the survivors of this regrettable and tragic episode.

It is appropriate and understandable that the African Union and the wider international community have given priority to preventing and fighting genocide. We reaffirm our renewed determination to ensure that genocide, like the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994, claiming the lives of nearly 1 million people, is never repeated on our continent.

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was recently adopted, is one of the means to build stability and tolerance as well as to combat the expansion of genocidal tendencies. We believe that the establishment of adequate monitoring mechanisms that act as an early warning system can prevent genocide and any tendency that can lead to crimes against humanity.

We appeal to Member States and to the relevant United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to survivors in the areas of education, medical care and psychological support.

We commend the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for its sterling work in prosecuting those responsible for the 1994 genocide. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to support and facilitate its work. The judgements of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda are important to the people of Rwanda and to humanity as a whole. In this respect, it is vital and necessary, as part of the contribution to national reconciliation and recovery, for the Tribunal’s records to be transferred to the Government and people of Rwanda. Knowledge of conditions that led to the Rwanda tragedy must be carefully preserved, as it is crucial to the memory of the victims and to the survivors as well as to the prevention of future genocides. The transfer of the records is a major contribution that the United Nations can make to national reconciliation, peace and stability in Rwanda.

All of us are aware that, after the genocide of 1994, Rwanda was not only emptied of its human resources but also robbed of its own soul. The mountains were full of unburied bodies; orphans were left with no shelter; women were raped and humiliated. It is therefore incumbent upon us, both individually and collectively, to support the people of that country in their efforts to accelerate national reconciliation and regain their dignity.

Today, it is our common obligation to give assistance and hope to the survivors. We recognize and commend the tremendous efforts made by the Government and the people of Rwanda to recover from the tragedy and to move forward in building a new society.

Peacebuilding consumes time and resources. It requires major sacrifices to heal the wounds, reunite the people and propel the country forward in its development efforts. The people of Rwanda need the continued and assured support of the international community in building a better tomorrow for present and future generations.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Group of African States and of the sponsors, I appeal to all partners to respond positively to the draft resolution and to translate it into concrete action. I also appeal to the international community to extend its solidarity to the

people of Rwanda, to join them in their efforts to prevent genocide and to ensure that our common call of “Never again” becomes a reality now, tomorrow and forever.

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/62/L.30 as orally corrected, A/62/L.34, A/62/L.36, A/62/L.37 and A/62/L.38, under agenda item 71 and its sub-items (a) and (c), and draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1, under agenda item 72.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/62/L.30 as orally corrected, A/62/L.34, A/62/L.36, A/62/L.37 and A/62/L.38, under agenda item 71 and its sub-items (a) and (c).

We first turn to draft resolution A/62/L.30, entitled “Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster”, as orally corrected. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.30, as orally corrected?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.30, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 62/91).*

**The President:** Draft resolution A/62/L.34 is entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, France, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.34?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.34 was adopted (resolution 62/92).*

**The President:** Draft resolution A/62/L.36 is entitled “Assistance to the Palestinian people”. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Croatia, Guatemala, Japan, Kuwait, Moldova, Monaco, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Timor-Leste and Ukraine. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.36?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.36 was adopted (resolution 62/93).*

**The President:** Draft resolution A/62/L.37 is entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, Pakistan and Zambia have become sponsors. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.37?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.37 was adopted (resolution 62/94).*

**The President:** Draft resolution A/62/L.38 is entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gabon, Georgia, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, New Zealand and Timor-Leste. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.38?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.38 was adopted (resolution 62/95).*

**The President:** We now turn to draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1, under agenda item 72. The draft resolution is entitled “Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence”. Since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Austria, Belgium, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Singapore and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.26/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 62/96).*

**The President:** I now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on one of the resolutions just adopted.

**Mr. Cohen (Israel):** Israel joined the consensus on draft resolution A/62/L.36, entitled “Assistance to the Palestinian people”. Israel has long supported humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, although, in the past, owing to realities on the ground, my delegation was compelled to abstain in the voting on draft resolutions on this subject. This year, as the current Palestinian leadership meets the standards of the international community, we are glad to join the consensus.

Israel’s support for this resolution, however, should not be misunderstood as an unconditional endorsement of all its elements; rather it should be seen as support for the overall concept of assistance to the Palestinian people. In fact, there are many aspects — omissions, in particular — that we still find highly problematic.

The resolution’s failure to mention Hamas, whose violent takeover of the Gaza Strip is causing a humanitarian situation there, highlights one of our most grievous concerns. Assistance to the Palestinian people, under the direction of the United Nations, cannot ignore Hamas’s terrorist rule of Gaza.

Similarly, it is regrettable that the resolution lacks anything more than a passing reference to Annapolis. Israel views the Annapolis meeting as a major positive step forward. This momentum should be reflected in the approach of the United Nations to our region.

Assistance to the Palestinian people, under the direction of the United Nations, cannot ignore the push for peace and negotiations between the two parties.

Surely, there is no monopoly on suffering. In the conflict in our region, Israelis and Palestinians have both suffered unjustly, and it is the obligation of all parties to respect the rights of one another and to adhere to the rule of law. The security of Israelis, who are under daily siege from the rocket barrages launched by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip, cannot be neglected. Late yesterday, a rocket fired by Palestinian terrorists in Gaza hit a house in Kibbutz Zikim, an Israeli communal farm less than a mile away, and wounded a 2-year-old boy. Assistance to the Palestinian people, under the direction of the United Nations, cannot ignore Israeli security concerns.

Similarly, we are disappointed also that the resolution fails to mention Corporal Gilad Shalit, who is now in his nineteenth month of captivity, held since June 2006 by terrorists in the Gaza Strip.

The international community should support the Palestinians in meeting their obligations under the Road Map, and should not allow States to obstruct and jeopardize the process.

Israel, for its part, will continue to support the Palestinian Authority, the Government of Prime Minister Fayad and President Abu Mazen, as it is a leadership that embraces the Quartet’s three basic conditions: recognition of Israel, an end to violence and terrorism and abiding by previous agreements.

In that connection, earlier today, at the donor conference in Paris, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni spoke of Israel’s interest in helping to stabilize the Palestinian economy and giving political support to the newly relaunched peace process between us and the Palestinians:

“The creation of a Palestinian State and the modernization of the Palestinian economy are in the interests of Israel, just as stopping terrorism is in the interests of the Palestinians”.

My delegation remains hopeful that, with responsible leadership and effective institutions, Israelis and Palestinians can work together to improve the humanitarian conditions and security of both their peoples. Indeed, a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians would be the greatest assistance to Palestinians and Israelis alike.

**The President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position. I now give the floor to those representatives wishing to make statements on the items under consideration.

**Mr. Lemos Godinho** (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is happy to see that the General Assembly has once again reached consensus on a number of important resolutions in the humanitarian sphere. We reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental principles underpinning the effective provision of humanitarian assistance. At the same time, we would have liked to see further progress on important contemporary humanitarian issues raised in the Secretary-General's reports, such as rapid access to victims and the need to further address sexual violence in humanitarian emergencies. We look forward to working with members of the Assembly in order to strengthen our political messages and guidance on those issues in the future.

The European Union would also like to reaffirm its strong commitment to the underlying principles of humanitarian assistance and to the need to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.

We also wish to express our highest support and admiration for those who risk their lives for those principles and to bring assistance to those in need. In that regard, we would like to highlight our deepest appreciation of the work undertaken by humanitarian actors and thank them for their important contribution to the alleviation of human suffering.

Finally, the European Union and its member States, as the world's largest humanitarian donors, remain as committed as ever to responding to the needs of victims on the ground, not just with assistance but by also continuing to engage positively with the humanitarian system, in particular the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, through policy dialogue and close cooperation.

**Mr. Dornig** (Liechtenstein): Following the adoption of resolution 62/95, "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", I am delivering this general statement on behalf of Liechtenstein and the delegation of New Zealand.

The safety and security of humanitarian personnel is a topic of utmost importance both for the United Nations and for the millions of people suffering from humanitarian emergencies. It is against that background that we have returned to co-sponsor the resolution just adopted.

Liechtenstein believes that ensuring the safety of people working in the field to achieve the goals of the United Nations is a crucial task for this Organization. That is particularly true for complex emergencies. Given that combating impunity for attacks against humanitarian personnel is one of the effective tools for increasing the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, it is vital that the resolution we have just adopted recalls that attacks against personnel involved in peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance missions can constitute war crimes, as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Throughout the negotiations on the resolution, we advocated the appropriate reference to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Also, the Protocol has been given a slightly more prominent position in the text. We regret that paragraph 13 does not refer to the key provisions of the Protocol, which would have been in the interest of host countries.

According to the most recent report of the Secretary-General on this topic, 15 out of every 16 United Nations staff members who lost their lives last year were recruited locally. We therefore join other delegations that were keen to stress that local aid workers are more vulnerable than international personnel. That is another area in which we hope that the text will be updated in the future so that it reflects reality on the ground.

**Mr. Nsengimana** (Rwanda): We welcome the adoption by consensus of resolution 62/96, entitled "Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence". We also express our appreciation to the sponsors of the resolution.

The tragic events that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 are among the darkest and most dreadful in human history. Over 1 million lives were lost and tens of thousands suffered horrific physical and psychological abuse and trauma. Over 300,000 children were orphaned, and thousands of women contracted HIV/AIDS as a result of rape.

Regrettably, the international community did not take timely and decisive action to prevent the tragic events from unfolding or to stop them when they had started. My delegation's understanding of the international community's responsibility to protect populations from genocide entails a responsibility to prevent genocide from occurring, a responsibility to protect if prevention fails, and a responsibility to rebuild if protection fails. This agenda sub-item enables the United Nations system and the wider international community to exercise their responsibility to rebuild Rwanda after the genocide.

My delegation welcomes the recognition in the Secretary-General's report of the progress that has been made in rebuilding Rwanda after the genocide. The Rwandan people have, for the most part, decided to put their painful history behind them and rebuild their country on a solid foundation based on reconciliation, justice, good governance, development, human rights and democracy. We commend the international community and the United Nations system for their support to Rwanda over the years, particularly support provided to vulnerable groups.

As the Secretary-General's report correctly points out, significant challenges remain, particularly among such vulnerable groups as orphans and widows. There is a need for continued support to those vulnerable groups of people, particularly in terms of assistance in shelter, health and education for orphans, medical care and treatment for victims of sexual violence, including HIV-positive victims, trauma and psychological counselling, skills training and microcredit programmes aimed at promoting self-sufficiency and alleviating poverty among the vulnerable groups.

We wish to commend the Department of Public Information for its work on Rwanda genocide victim remembrance and education, conducted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/225. A successful exhibit took place at United Nations Headquarters in April this year to mark the thirteenth commemoration of the Rwanda genocide, and was opened by the

Secretary-General. Similar activities took place in several other cities around the world.

There is a need for that programme to be continued into the next biennium. The challenges facing the world today from rising xenophobia, racism and ethnic and religious tensions require that the lessons of the Rwanda genocide be widely taught and disseminated among all people, particularly the young. We therefore call upon all delegations to support the extension of the programme for the biennium 2008-2009.

*Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of Member States to the decision of the Security Council to begin completing the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 2008 in accordance with its completion strategy. While we commend the Tribunal for the work it has conducted so far, we should recall that there is still a lot of work left to be done, including the completion of many trials. There are also residual issues relating to genocide survivors, in particular witness and victim support and protection, capacity-building for the Rwandan judiciary, and the transfer of court documents and records to Rwanda to contribute to genocide-victim remembrance and education. We appreciate the support of delegations in that regard also.

**The Acting President:** I now call on the observer of Palestine.

**Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser (Palestine):** International assistance in its many forms remains vital for continued Palestinian subsistence and steadfastness during the critical period of grave socio-economic difficulty and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as for the building of the foundations of a future independent Palestinian State. The assistance that has been provided over the years, both through the United Nations and through direct donor assistance to the Palestinian people, has helped to alleviate hardship through endless periods of instability, uncertainty and crisis. It has also been instrumental in helping the Palestinian Authority repair, rebuild, reform and develop its institutions and its public-sector capabilities. On behalf of the Palestinian people and their leadership, I today express

our deepest gratitude and appreciation for all that assistance.

We thank all of the sponsors. We also thank the members of the European Union for their leading sponsorship of the resolution and for their consistent generosity, as displayed once again today in Paris alongside the rest of the international community, pledging much-needed assistance.

Palestine promoted and is appreciative of the spirit of consensus on this resolution. We believe that it sends an important message, particularly in the context of the important donor conference convened today in Paris in follow-up to the international Conference held at Annapolis. We are hopeful that all of these efforts will enhance coordination and cooperation and will lead to increased assistance to the Palestinian people and their leadership at this time.

At the same time, however, it must be made clear that, while it has this consensus, Israel, the occupying Power, should not be absolved of accountability for the negative role that it has played and continues to play in obstructing assistance to the Palestinian people. This is demonstrated, in particular, by its continued siege and closure of the Gaza Strip, its destruction of millions of dollars' worth of assistance projects and its daily creation of new reasons and needs for assistance to the Palestinian people through its ongoing illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory. These actions include the ongoing construction of settlements and the separation wall, and its continuing imposition of restrictions on the movement of persons and goods throughout the West Bank — all of which cause the continued deterioration of socio-economic conditions, further aggravate the humanitarian situation and seriously undermine assistance efforts at all levels, with wide-ranging consequences.

Israel has clear obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in terms of its actions as the occupying Power — obligations with which it should be compelled to comply. In that regard, moreover, the international community's responsibilities under international law to respect and to ensure respect are clear.

Only by addressing such important issues can the international community, along with the commitment reaffirmed here today in the General Assembly and the pledges and commitments being made in Paris, truly turn the process of assistance to the Palestinian people

from one of humanitarian relief efforts, poverty alleviation, repair and crisis management into one of genuine development and state-building with a view to the day when the occupation has become history and a viable, contiguous and independent Palestinian state has been established.

While meeting the basic humanitarian needs of the Palestinian civilian population for food, medicine and other essentials at this time remains paramount, we must simultaneously focus efforts on vital infrastructure projects, the development of industry and employment generation, in order to truly address the high levels of unemployment and poverty that have been inflicted upon the Palestinian people. Combined, such efforts can promote real change in the socio-economic situation and promote the financial stability of the Palestinian Authority; real economic recovery and development, including the development of strong and capable Government institutions; and security for both peoples, as security is not an exclusive Israeli right, but a mutual right and need of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

On this occasion, we reaffirm our deepest gratitude to the entire international community in all corners of the globe for the assistance support so generously extended to the Palestinian people over many years. We express our thanks to all donor countries for their important assistance, no project or effort of which is too small and all of which is deeply appreciated. We also express once again our sincerest thanks to the United Nations, which, with the support of Member States and through the work of its many agencies on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory, has been providing the Palestinian people — including the Palestine refugees — with vital assistance for decades.

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the General Assembly and its President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg for undertaking the task of holding consultations and negotiations on the resolutions adopted under agenda items 71 and 72.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its considerations of sub-items (a) to (c) of agenda item 71 and agenda item 71 as a whole?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 72?

*It was so decided.*

### **Agenda item 43 (continued)**

#### **Report of the Economic and Social Council**

##### **Draft resolution (A/62/L.33)**

**The Acting President:** Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 39th plenary meeting, on 30 October 2007.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.33.

**Miss Ayesha** (Pakistan): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as the other sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Graduation of Samoa", contained in document A/62/L.33.

We stress the need for a smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries. In that regard, the Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session this year, decided in its resolution 2007/35 to endorse the recommendation of the Committee for Development Policy that Samoa be graduated from the list of least developed countries. It is against that backdrop that the Group of 77 and China have tabled the draft resolution, which requires the attention of the international community.

No country wants to live in poverty forever, and all of us agree with the concept of graduation. However, the criteria and rules for graduation need to be fair and the country concerned should be fully on board. Samoa is economically vulnerable. As a small island developing State, it is also vulnerable to the impact of climate change. We request the development partners to be forthcoming in recognizing those vulnerabilities and, in the event of Samoa's graduation, to continue providing assistance for the country's smooth transition and long-term development.

We also reiterate our call for the full, timely and effective implementation of the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for implementation to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of least developed countries, landlocked

developing countries and small island developing States.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank all those Member States that have sponsored this important draft resolution and I hope that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/62/L.33.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Samoa for an explanation of vote before the voting.

**Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa): I would like to thank the representative of Pakistan for introducing, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/62/L.33.

In the same vein, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Haiti, in his capacity as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, for facilitating the draft resolution on Samoa's graduation from the list of least developed countries. I would like to recall in particular his willingness to include our proposed text as the final sentence of the draft resolution to replace the one in past resolutions on the same topic.

Some may wonder what motive or useful purpose our amendment will serve, given that Samoa's graduation has already been agreed to by the Economic and Social Council and is therefore a mere formality. Our objective was simple. We wanted to place the responsibility for the decision to graduate Samoa firmly and squarely on the Economic and Social Council as the intergovernmental body with the mandate to do so, irrespective of the processes and reports it might have utilized to arrive at its decision. Past resolutions to the General Assembly on least developed country (LDC) graduation appeared to give greater prominence to the recommendation of the Committee for Development Policy for countries to graduate from the LDC list, rather than the Council's role in the final decision-making process. Our input was therefore intended to provide clarity and to link the graduation decision to the substantive decision maker.

The draft resolution before the Assembly is a short one, but its brevity belies the amount of time and effort spent by all concerned to get us to this juncture. During a period of almost two years, numerous negotiating sessions, consultations and informal informals took place. Samoa, for its part, participated in the process under the leadership of the LDC and the wider G77 and China groups. Our delegation made two presentations to the Committee for Development Policy and addressed the Economic and Social Council on three separate occasions. Our Prime Minister wrote to the Economic and Social Council in 2006 and again raised the graduation issue in his statement in September during the midterm review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

The record will show that the graduation issue ultimately led to a divided vote in the Economic and Social Council in May 2007, and that on more than one occasion it polarized the positions of Council members. In recounting the history of Samoa's graduation, it is not my intention to dwell on the past. That, rightfully, has long been water under the bridge, but reflecting on past events helps to inform our present actions in a positive way and prepares us for the task that lies ahead.

What is not so obvious from a casual reading of the draft resolution are the following critical elements: first, the vital role of the three-year transitional period for Samoa to cultivate durable partnerships to enhance its resilience and endurance to external shocks to its economy, thus guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of its development efforts; secondly, the call of the Economic and Social Council on the Committee for Development Policy to develop a consistent set of criteria that can be applied to all recommendations on the inclusion in and graduation from the list of LDCs, with due account being taken of economic vulnerability as a structural characteristic of the least developed countries; and thirdly, in pursuing the stance we took with passion and commitment, we hope that we have succeeded in raising awareness in the Economic and Social Council and the wider United Nations membership of the importance of the economic vulnerability index, as recognized in the Council's resolution 2007/35 of 27 July 2007.

We trust that the Committee for Development Policy will analyse the economic vulnerability index comprehensively in all its manifestations at its next

scheduled review of the LDC criteria. One hopes also that the said review will help validate some of our deep-rooted concerns, especially in view of the emerging trend whereby only small island developing States are graduating or found eligible to graduate from the LDC list despite dire warnings and reports from the United Nations system singling out, for instance, the Pacific small island developing States as way off the mark and off track in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

As I said at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2007, after much soul-searching and reflection, Samoa has finally accepted, albeit with some foreboding, the verdict of the international community, or more precisely the clearly expressed belief of our development partners that Samoa now possesses the minimum requirements necessary for it to cross a new threshold in its nation-building endeavour. Despite uncertainties about our capacity to sustain our economic performance at current levels, coupled with the lingering fear of venturing beyond one's comfort zone into uncharted territories, the draft resolution before us clearly represents a defining moment in Samoa's international relations and collaborative efforts with its development partners and the almost impulsive need to take a giant leap of faith in the future, believing in oneself and that, through joint action and concerted and sheer hard work, no goal is unattainable.

Samoa's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to the economic and social shocks that prey and feed on its structural weakness is a real and true challenge that cannot be wished away or eliminated simply through the overnight change of one's status from an LDC to a developing country. Those concerns were at the very heart of our contention that we were not ready yet to graduate. Additionally, the inevitable loss of special and preferential treatment granted Samoa through its LDC status will have a negative impact on Samoa's effort to try to consolidate the modest gains it might have made over the years.

We belaboured those points over and over again in the negotiations, always to be reassured by our partners that they were willing and ready to assist us once we rid ourselves of the least developed country tag. All those positive signals, dangling so suggestively, were always tempting, to say the least. More seriously, they meant that if we did not respond appropriately, Samoa could end up with its least

developed country status intact, but at the expense of losing the goodwill and willingness of our partners to stand by us when we really would need their help.

Needless to say, Samoa must work hard at building bridges of understanding and support with its partners, both developed and developing, to enhance its human, financial and institutional capacity so that it can successfully integrate into the global economy. While the primary responsibility rests with the Government and people of Samoa to chart their own destiny, the time for the promised assistance to materialize to help us sustain our progress and development is now, not after the transitional period is over or when we slip back to reclaim least developed country status again.

That is Samoa's story. That is my story and that is our future generation's story. We made our decision to graduate in good faith. Only the future knows what it has in store for us. But knowing deep down in your heart of hearts that your partners and friends will not abandon you in your time of need, but will be at your side no matter what, is all the assurance we need. We now jointly start a new chapter in Samoa's history so that five years, 20 years or even a century from now, Samoa can look back to this day, this month and this year with fond memories and say thanks to the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Group of Least Developed Countries, and the Group of 77 and China, as well as all our development partners, for their support and for having faith in us.

Samoa supports the draft resolution and will vote accordingly. I rest my case.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.33, entitled "Graduation of Samoa". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.33?

*Draft resolution A/62/L.33 was adopted (resolution 62/97).*

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

## Agenda item 54

### Sustainable development

#### Report of the Second Committee (A/62/419 (Part I))

**The Acting President:** If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Second Committee that is before the Assembly today?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Second Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee and that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Second Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Second Committee.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. We will now take action on the draft resolution. The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 62/98).*

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

**Mr. Lemos Godinho (Portugal):** I make this statement on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union considers this moment a milestone in the context of international forest policy and cooperation. The adoption of both the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests and the multi-year programme of work for 2007-2015 is a remarkable result of the tireless efforts of the international forest community. We have never gone this far at the global level.

This is a moment of joy and pride and a moment of confidence in what can be achieved through international dialogue and cooperation. However, at the same time, this entails a huge responsibility for all, as commitments and actions will have to be taken in the short and medium term and progress is expected. The clock is ticking, and forests are running out of time.

At this stage, the European Union reiterates its strong commitment to the results achieved at the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. The successful implementation of the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests and the overall accomplishment of the multi-year programme of work for 2007-2015 are challenges we are ready to face and expect to win.

However, we are well aware that Governments working alone will not succeed. All partners and interested stakeholders must be involved. The different forms of expertise of the various potential agents cannot be ignored. On the other hand, we cannot afford to duplicate efforts. The European Union therefore takes this opportunity to reiterate the invitation to the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to provide their valuable input in accordance with their mandates.

Now that we are about to start a new chapter in the international dialogue and cooperation on forests, we find it most appropriate to pay tribute to all those involved in the process that culminated in today's adoption of both the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests and the multi-year programme of work.

Allow us to express our special thanks for the decisive contribution of Mr. Hans Hoogeveen for his highly professional leadership of the Bureau of the United Nations Forum on Forests at its seventh session

and for having so skilfully facilitated the final stage of the informal consultations, which enabled us to achieve consensus on the text adopted today.

In addition, the European Union would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Pekka Patosaari, on the occasion of his retirement, not only for his strong commitment to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests, by leading its secretariat for the last five years, but also for his significant contribution to the international and pan-European forest policy process. I would like to add, on a personal note, that I am glad to associate myself with this comment on Mr. Pekka Patosaari.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 54.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to revert to agenda item 49, "Culture of Peace", to announce, for the record, all the additional sponsors of draft resolutions A/62/L.6 and A/62/L.17/Rev.1.

Since the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.6, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010", the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, the Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

Since the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", the following countries have become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Gabon, Guinea, Iraq, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Marshall Islands, the Russian Federation and Timor-Leste.

**Programme of work**

**The President:** I should like to consult members regarding a further extension for the work of the Second Committee. Members will recall that at its 63rd plenary meeting, on 6 December 2007, the General Assembly agreed to an extension for the work of the Second Committee until Friday, 14 December. Subsequently, I have been informed by the Chairperson of the Second Committee that the Committee was not able to finish its work and that it requested an extension until Tuesday, 18 December.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Second Committee until Tuesday, 18 December 2007? I see no objection.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** Before adjourning this meeting, may I invite Members to remain seated so that we may begin the informal segment for a special event to commemorate the adoption of the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*