



General Assembly

Sixty-third session

73rd plenary meeting

Monday, 22 December 2008, 3 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 104 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/312)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987 and upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

The document before the Assembly contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee that will occur as a result of the expiration, on 31 December 2008, of the terms of office of Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, Cuba, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Pakistan, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland and Uruguay. Members will recall that there still remains one vacant seat from among the Western European and other States whose mandate will expire on 31 December 2008.

These States are eligible for immediate re-election. I have also been informed by the President of the Economic and Social Council, in a letter dated 19 December 2008, that the Council has nominated South Africa to fill the vacancy arising from Swaziland's withdrawal.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 2009, the following States will remain members of the Committee: Bangladesh, China, the Comoros, France, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Niger, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Therefore, those 13 States are not eligible to run in this election.

I should now like to inform members that the following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council. The four African States for four vacancies are: the Central African Republic, Guinea, Nigeria and South Africa. The four Asian States for four vacancies are: India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The three Eastern European States for three vacancies are: Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine. The four Latin American and Caribbean States for four vacancies are: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Uruguay. The two Western European and other States for two of five vacancies are: Italy and Spain.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs, when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

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It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Asian States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States is equal to or less than the number of seats to be filled in each of those groups.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council, namely, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Brazil, the Central African Republic, Cuba, Guinea, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine and Uruguay, elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate the States that have just been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that from previous sessions, and as indicated in A/63/312, there remain two vacancies in the Group of Western European and other States for members whose term of office would begin on the date of election. One term will expire on 31 December 2008 and the other on 31 December 2009.

Members are also reminded that the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of three members from the Western European and other States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2009. The General Assembly will be in a position to act on these vacancies upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council of Member States from that region.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 104.

(b) Election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 (a) to (e) of General Assembly resolution 60/180 of 20 December 2005, the Organizational Committee shall comprise the following: seven members of the Security Council, including five permanent members; seven members of the Economic and Social Council,

elected from regional groups; five top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peacebuilding fund; five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions; and seven additional members elected by the General Assembly, giving due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Committee.

Members will also recall that, at its 111th plenary meeting of the sixty-second session, on 11 July 2008, the General Assembly extended to 31 December 2008, the terms of office of the current members of the Assembly on the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, namely Burundi, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador and Fiji.

By resolution 63/145 of 18 December 2008, the General Assembly decided that, beginning with the election to be held during the sixty-third session, the term of office for the members of the General Assembly on the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission shall begin from 1 January instead of from 23 June.

The Assembly also decided that the term of office of the two members of the General Assembly on the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission due to expire on 22 June 2009, namely Georgia and Jamaica, shall be extended to 31 December 2009.

Also, by a letter dated 19 December 2008 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, contained in document A/63/631, the facilitator of the troop-contributing countries informed me of their decision that the terms of office of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Nigeria and Pakistan from the troop-contributing countries category of membership will be from 1 January 2009 until 31 December 2010.

Also, by a letter dated 18 December 2008 addressed to the Secretary-General, contained in document A/63/632, the facilitator of the group of the leading financial contributors informed the Secretary-General that the financial contributors have decided to extend the terms of office of their five members, namely Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden, to 31 December 2010.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of documents A/63/631 and A/63/632?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is also my understanding that on 19 December 2008, the Economic and Social Council decided that, starting in 2009, the two-year term of members of the Council elected to the Organizational Committee will begin on 1 January instead of 23 June.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. By resolution 60/261, the Assembly decided that the members of the Organizational Committee shall serve for renewable terms of two years, as applicable. Accordingly, Burundi, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador and Fiji are eligible for immediate re-election.

Regarding candidatures for the five seats, I should like to inform members that: for the African States, the group has endorsed Benin and South Africa; for the Asian States, the group has endorsed Thailand; for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the group has endorsed Chile and Uruguay.

Members will recall that, in resolution 60/261, the General Assembly decided that the rules of procedure and established practice of the Assembly for the election of members of its subsidiary bodies shall apply to its election of members of the Committee. For this election, rules 92 and 94 shall be applicable. Accordingly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the number of candidates endorsed by the Group of African States, the Group of Asian States and the

Group of Latin American and Caribbean States corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect Benin, Chile, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate Benin, Chile, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay on their election as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

As of now, therefore, the members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission from 1 January 2009 are as follows: Bangladesh, Benin, Chile, China, El Salvador, France, Georgia, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, India, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, for undertaking the task of coordinating consultations and negotiations on this very important issue.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 104?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 43 (continued)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Draft resolution (A/63/L.62)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on agenda item 43 jointly with agenda item 57 and its sub-items (a) and (b) at the 26th, 27th and 29th plenary meetings, on 15 and 20 October 2008.

I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.62.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco): On behalf of the African Group and all sponsors, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.62, entitled “2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa”.

The African Group wishes to thank, particularly, the United Republic of Tanzania for diligently facilitating the negotiations. The delegation of Tanzania performed excellent work in highlighting the most relevant measures to roll back malaria in malaria-endemic countries. The African Group wishes also to thank all Member States that enriched the deliberations during the negotiations.

Malaria accounts for more than a million deaths each year, of which 80 per cent occur on our continent, Africa, where malaria is the leading cause of mortality in children under five years of age. Ninety per cent of the most severely affected African countries are more exposed to malaria, and HIV prevalence is more than 10 per cent in those countries.

It is because Africa bears an overwhelming proportion of the malaria scourge that we, as Member States, have the duty to unite our efforts, through malaria control strategies, to ensure the achievement of the 2010-2015 targets, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the global strategy of the World Health Organization (WHO).

While malaria is a disease that affects mostly developing countries, the disease knows no national boundaries. Concerted efforts on the part of all Member States, the relevant international organizations and the private sector are thus needed if we are to succeed in combating the disease.

Implementation of the Roll Back Malaria Global Strategic Plan and the Global Malaria Action Plan developed by the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, as well as other WHO recommendations, are thus critical to meeting the international targets on malaria. We are very confident that development agendas will help strengthen health systems and increase access to high-quality malaria prevention and treatment services in malaria-endemic countries.

The African Group is presenting this annual draft resolution as part of our effort to respond to the specific needs of Africa, as well as to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6. The struggle against malaria is another example attesting to the urgency of

providing universal access to malaria-control interventions to at-risk young children and pregnant women, whose fates must never be forgotten.

We all know that political commitment, adequate resources and research into advanced sciences and technology on malaria prevention and treatment could drastically reduce malaria deaths by 2010, because malaria is preventable, treatable and curable. We are counting on sustained and continued bilateral and multilateral support in order to combat the disease.

The draft resolution before members, entitled “2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa”, is an update of previous resolutions. This update takes into account recent developments and scientific measures to combat malaria. Further, the draft welcomes the theme of “Malaria — a disease without borders”, which was chosen for the first World Malaria Day, and the sustained increase in funding for malaria interventions, as well as the predictability of that funding. The draft resolution also welcomes the designation by the Secretary-General of a Special Envoy for Malaria, who will cooperate with other stakeholders to work with national and global leaders to help secure political will, partnerships and funds for malaria.

The African Group calls upon the international community to work in a spirit of cooperation towards sustained support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership secretariat and other partners and to support coordinated efforts to strengthen health systems and scale up interventions so as to reduce the burden of malaria.

In introducing the draft resolution under consideration and as in previous sessions of the General Assembly, the African Group seeks the adoption of this draft resolution by the General Assembly without a vote, thus signalling the strong political commitment of Member States to roll back malaria by 2010 and to work together towards its full eradication.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/63/L.62.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.62. Before we take action on the draft resolution, I should like to inform the Assembly that the following countries have become sponsors:

Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Guyana, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Timor-Leste.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.62?

Draft resolution A/63/L.62 was adopted (resolution A/63/234).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 43?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 107 (continued)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/63/L.64)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on agenda item 107 jointly with agenda items 44 and 112 at the 51st plenary meeting, on 17 November 2008. Members will also recall that the Assembly took action on draft resolutions A/63/L.27 and A/63/L.25/Rev.1 under this agenda item at the 51st and 68th plenary meetings.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.64.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsors, to submit for the General Assembly's consideration and adoption a draft resolution entitled "Agriculture development and food security" and contained in document A/63/L.64.

The draft resolution is a culmination of this year's efforts by Chile, Egypt and Indonesia to advance the issue of agriculture development and food security in the General Assembly. Back in June, these three countries humbly suggested to the President of the General Assembly that the issue of food security and agriculture development be taken up as a theme for the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. We believe the President's positive response and the subsequent dialogue and action will contribute to global efforts being made to address this issue.

The resolution establishes "Agriculture development and food security" as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly. It is our view that this will encourage the advancement of discussions which in turn could build global consensus on addressing questions of agriculture development and food security. Our aim, however, must not be merely to stimulate an in-depth worldwide debate on the absolute need for food security; it must be much more. Our aim must be to establish food security as a permanent and prominent item on the global development agenda.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on "Agriculture development and food security", which will include national, regional and international efforts on the issue, as requested in the draft resolution. As the Secretary-General has indicated, tackling this issue will require international leadership and coordination at the highest level. That is the basis for the draft resolution we are presenting today.

In closing, on behalf of Chile, Egypt, Indonesia and all the other sponsors of this resolution, we would like to express our highest appreciation for the support, constructive debate and flexibility shown by all delegations during the informal consultations. With these introductory remarks, I now propose draft resolution A/63/L.64 for the General Assembly's consideration and adoption by consensus.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/63/L.64. I should like to inform the Assembly that the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Angola, Australia, Canada, China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.64?

Draft resolution A/62/L.64 was adopted (resolution 63/235).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

Agenda item 114 (continued)**Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations****(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie****Draft resolution (A/63/L.59)**

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 114 and its sub-items (a) to (u) at its 36th and 37th plenary meetings, on 3 November 2008.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.59. I have been informed that the following delegations have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Angola, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Djibouti, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Thailand, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.59?

Draft resolution A/63/L.59 was adopted (resolution 63/236).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Saint Arnaud (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The Canadian delegation welcomes the adoption of this resolution and thanks Member States for their support. We would also like to thank the very many sponsors of this text, which marks an important stage in relations between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (IOF). We thank delegations of member States and observers of the IOF for their cooperation. We also thank the States that are not members or observers of the IOF who have been good enough to co-sponsor this text. Their support is entirely in keeping with the importance that the IOF attaches to multilingualism and cultural diversity. It is also good support for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in general, which constitutes an indispensable tool in attaining the goals of the United Nations.

The year 2008 will have been an important year for the IOF in Canada with the holding of the Quebec summit in October. We are happy to see the results of collaboration between the United Nations and the IOF, which over the next few months, will pave the way for preparations for the forthcoming IOF summit, to be held in 2010 in Madagascar.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (k) of agenda item 114?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 155**Recognition of sickle-cell anaemia as a public health priority****Draft resolution (A/63/L.63)**

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of the Congo, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.63.

Mr. Balé (Congo) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.63, entitled "Recognition of sickle-cell anaemia as a public health problem".

It is true that the genetic blood disease known as sickle-cell anaemia, although it is present on all continents, generally speaking does not cause much reaction; hence the lack of interest it gives rise to. Unless one is affected oneself or if one's loved one is affected, or unless one is working in the field of medicine, this hereditary disease is little known to the public at large. However, according to estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO), it affects almost 100 million people worldwide, including all forms of the disease. Unless handled robustly in its early stages, it can cause the death of more than 50 per cent of people affected in its severest form, referred to in medical jargon as homozygosity or the SS disease. Moreover, the prevalence of malaria and the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS following a blood transfusion constitute factors for increased mortality rates among carriers of this disease. To that situation are added the obscurantist beliefs to be found in many regions that are highly infected, all of which fosters ignorance of the disease and increases these grim statistics.

It is a disquieting picture, but it has not been enough to remove sickle-cell anaemia from its orphan

medical ghetto: unlike AIDS or malaria, it has to date not really drawn the attention of decision makers.

Today, with the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Recognition of sickle-cell anaemia as a public health problem", we shall mark the beginning of an important stage in ending the long isolation of this disease. But we shall be doing more than that: it is now the hope of more than 100 million carriers of the disease that bolder action in the future will help resolutely and effectively to tackle this disease in order to alleviate their suffering and increase their life expectancy. That is why we welcome the fact that, on 19 June every year, activities to raise public awareness about sickle-cell anaemia will be made possible at the national and international levels.

We have no doubt that the adoption of this draft resolution will ensure support from both Member States and partners and thus will reflect their commitment to assisting efforts to combat sickle-cell anaemia, including in the context of strengthening public health through various development programmes.

Obviously, all relevant current and future activities are aimed at eliminating this disease as a public health problem. Therefore, basic and applied research into this disease should be a natural compliment to this awareness-raising campaign and our struggle.

I am confident that the General Assembly will send a message of hope to the hundreds of millions of people suffering from sickle-cell anaemia throughout the world by adopting this draft resolution by consensus.

Finally, I should like to sincerely thank all delegations that have taken an active part in the consultations leading to the adoption of this text. I am also grateful to the sponsor countries.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.63, entitled "Recognition of sickle-cell anaemia as a public health problem". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following

countries have become sponsors: Cuba, Egypt and Slovenia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.63?

Draft resolution A/63/L.63 was adopted (resolution 63/237).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 155?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would now like to draw the attention of members to the date of recess of the present session. Members will recall that, at its 69th plenary meeting, on 15 December 2008, the General Assembly decided that the sixty-third session would recess on Monday, 22 December 2008. However, in view of the work that remains to be done for this part of the session, I would like to propose to the Assembly that it postpone the date of recess of the current session until Tuesday, 23 December 2008.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would also like to consult members regarding an extension for the work of the Fifth Committee. Members will recall that, at its 69th plenary meeting, on 15 December 2008, the General Assembly agreed to extend the work of the Fifth Committee to Monday, 22 December 2008. However, I have been informed by the Chairperson of the Fifth Committee that the Committee will not be able to finish its work today, Monday, 22 December, and will need additional meetings until Tuesday, 23 December 2008.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Fifth Committee until Tuesday, 23 December 2008?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.