



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

69th plenary meeting
 Wednesday, 18 December 2013, 10 a.m.
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Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

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

The Acting President: Members will recall that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 (a) to (e) of resolution 60/180, of 20 December 2005, the Organizational Committee shall comprise the following: seven members of the Security Council, including the 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 the 83rd plenary meeting of its sixty-sixth session, the Assembly elected Croatia and El Salvador as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office beginning

on 1 January 2012, and, at the 62nd and 65th plenary meetings of its sixty-seventh session, the Assembly elected Brazil, Kenya, Malaysia, Peru and South Africa as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2013.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of two members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

By resolution 60/261, of 8 May 2006, the Assembly decided that the members of the Organizational Committee shall serve for renewable terms of two years, as applicable. Accordingly, Croatia and El Salvador are eligible for immediate re-election.

Regarding candidatures for the two seats, I should like to inform members that for the Eastern European States, the Group has endorsed Bosnia and Herzegovina; for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed Guatemala.

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 also like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs

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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 Acting President: Since the number of candidates endorsed by the Group of Eastern European 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 Bosnia and Herzegovina and Guatemala as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2014?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina and Guatemala for their election as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 15

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/286)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/216)

Draft resolutions A/68/L.28, A/68/L.30 and A/68/L.31

The Acting President: In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/68/286) and a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (A/68/216). The Assembly also has before it three draft resolutions issued as documents A/68/L.28, A/68/L.30 and A/68/L.31.

I would furthermore like to draw the attention of members to a letter dated 22 August 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, transmitting the sixth annual report of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (A/68/361).

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.28.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): On behalf of its sponsors, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.28, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”. Bangladesh has taken pride in submitting this draft resolution to the Assembly since 2001. Since that time, the draft resolution has received the overwhelming support of Member States and has been adopted each year by consensus.

Despite many efforts and many pro-people and pro-planet resolutions aimed at improving sustainable peace and stability across nations, it is unfortunate that incidents of violence, conflict, killing, prejudice and human suffering have yet to become history and that peace remains elusive. A culture of peace is therefore urgently needed. We need to create a mindset of tolerance and of respect — respect for the law and for others and respect for diversity, irrespective of caste, creed, color, race or religion. We believe that all violence, misunderstanding, war and terror emanate from a mindset of intolerance, ignorance, hatred and disrespect for others.

The world faces too many problems due to divisiveness and narrow-mindedness, which disrupt and derail our shared objectives of sustainable peace, stability and progress. For the world order to move away from its present chaotic, uncertain and violent condition, building a culture of peace will provide the solution. Promoting and inculcating a mindset of the culture of peace forms the core of the creative management of differences and divisions.

Although we have witnessed the completion of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, we must maintain and strengthen the draft resolution now, even more than in years past.

Impressive frameworks are to be found in documents, but translating them into action remains a daunting task. Inequality, discrimination, misunderstanding and

intolerance around the globe are generating new levels of conflict. We need a culture that upholds human dignity and promotes understanding and respect among nations. In times of tension and fear, we need calm and reason. I have no doubt that such can be achieved by inculcating and promoting a culture of peace.

Against that backdrop, my delegation has submitted this annual draft resolution. We thank delegations for their proactive participation in the negotiation process. We also thank them for their valuable inputs and cooperation. This year, the draft resolution contains a basic technical update to the draft resolutions of previous years. Apart from technical updates, the draft resolution incorporates a few additional elements. They are as follows.

First, the draft resolution welcomes the successful holding of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, as envisaged by resolution 67/106, and refers in particular to the high-level and wide-ranging participation.

Secondly, the draft resolution notes the mention by the Secretary-General in this year's report (A/68/286) that peace should be given due consideration in the post-2015 development agenda.

Thirdly, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on actions of all the relevant entities of the United Nations to implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as requested, at its sixty-ninth session.

The High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, organized by the President of the General Assembly and convened on 6 September, provided the Assembly a unique opportunity to bring together all stakeholders and to reinvigorate our common endeavour. The enthusiasm exhibited during the Forum inspired us to accommodate a provision on the convening of such a high-level forum in September 2014. We are extremely pleased that the Member States agreed to retain that provision in the text. The holding of such events every year will not necessarily require any additional cost in terms of the United Nations budget. But it will convey a strong message to the world, and especially to the younger generation, that the United Nations is truly committed to nurturing a culture of peace.

Every year, the draft resolution receives the support of a large number of States. I am pleased to mention that this year, more than 100 countries are sponsoring

the draft resolution. That reflects the fact that a culture of peace is very dear to all of us. It is an aspiration of all humankind. It is the essence of the Charter of the United Nations.

I thank and commend all of the sponsors for their support and commitment. It is my belief and hope that one day, not only every delegation will come forward to sponsor the draft resolution, but that, more important, every nation, every society, every family and every household will practice the spirit and mindset of a culture of peace, aiming at our cherished goal of sustainable peace, stability and prosperity across nations.

With that aspiration, I hope that, as in past years, we will be able to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.28 by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.31.

Mr. Khzaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): On behalf of its sponsors, I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 15, draft resolution A/68/L.31, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism". Since the publication of the draft resolution, 13 new sponsors have joined the initial 12 sponsors of the draft resolution. They are Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia, China, India, Iraq, Japan, Nicaragua, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey and Thailand.

Let me first express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors of the draft resolution and all other delegations for their constructive participation and support during the open and transparent consultations that my delegation conducted. Their proposals, suggestions and interventions made the draft resolution more robust and helped to accommodate the views of different Member States. The cross-regional sponsorship also underscores the universal recognition of the need to act on the pressing global challenges of violence and violent extremism. In that spirit, the sponsors respectfully call on all Member States to support the draft resolution today.

Growing violent extremism, in particular sectarian violence, which plagues many parts of the world, constitutes the core issue that the draft resolution deals with. It draws on the ideas presented by His Excellency Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during his electoral campaign, and the need to promote prudent moderation and reject extremism and

violence. That overarching theme was further developed in the statement that he delivered during the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.6). He devoted the best part of his statement to the imperative of fighting violence and extremism. In his statement, he talked of fears and hopes — the “fear of the institutionalization of violence and extremism” — and the hope of a preference for dialogue over conflict and moderation over extremism. President Rouhani expressed alarm over “the catastrophic impact of violent and extremist narratives” and reiterated that it should not — in fact, must not — be underestimated. He also expressed regret over the fact that violence and extremism nowadays had gone beyond the physical realm and had unfortunately afflicted, entrenched and tarnished the mental and spiritual dimension of life in human societies. While stressing the need to promote and reinforce tolerance, he proposed to the United Nations to consider the idea of a world against violence and violent extremism.

The draft resolution was crafted on the basis of the foregoing, as well as in the light of the dismaying developments in part of the world and the great importance that we attach to the fight against the violence, extremism and sectarian violence that threaten to plague our region and other parts of the world. Given those developments, it is imperative today, more than ever before, that the international community agree on effective measures to combat violent extremism.

The time has now come for the General Assembly, as the sole universal body encompassing representatives of nearly every nation on Earth, to act to address violent extremism and the wide-ranging problems that it creates and to take the first step in laying the foundation for promoting an institutionalized fight against sectarian violence and violent extremism. We hope that the draft resolution provides a solid basis for such a process. Our action in the General Assembly could be part of, and contribute to, other endeavours at the domestic and regional levels in addressing multifront confrontations and redressing the conditions and situations in which only violent nihilism could thrive.

The draft resolution means to serve as a call to break the endless repetition of the past, uphold the concept of citizenship over sectarian allegiances, place the next generation’s prosperity above the settling of past scores and look to the future with hope and prudent moderation as the master key. By adopting the draft resolution, all Member States would also concur that,

in dealing with the threat of violence and extremism, we all need to cooperate, and there is no room for a zero-sum game in any field.

The draft resolution is new in the sense that the General Assembly has not dealt with violent extremism in the past. It expresses alarm over the rise in violent extremism, condemns all those behind that scourge and their acts, such as targeting the civilian population, attacking religious and cultural sites and disrupting the development process in societies. The draft resolution reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the obligations of all States to refrain from the threat or use of force and to settle their international disputes by peaceful means, as armed conflicts could create the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism. It also emphasizes the importance of tolerance and respect for human rights as an antidote to violent extremism.

The draft resolution invites all Member States, the United Nations system and other international and non-governmental organizations to initiate policies aimed at checking the spread of violent extremism and sectarian violence.

Concrete remedies are an important element of the present draft resolution, including those it recommends in the fields of education and community engagement, as is the appeal it makes to all actors to take up and implement those remedies.

The Secretary-General is also requested to keep the General Assembly informed at its seventieth session on the implementation of the present draft resolution and to recommend ways and means by which the United Nations system and the Secretariat could assist Member States in generating public awareness about the dangers of intolerance, as well as fostering understanding and non-violence.

Finally, allow me to express my sincere hope that the draft resolution will gain the broadest possible support and be adopted by consensus. That will help accelerate coordination and cooperation among States towards addressing the growing problems emanating from violent extremism.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.30.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): It is my great honour to join the representative of the Republic of the

Philippines as a sponsor in introducing the text of the draft resolution entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/68/L.30).

The representative of the Republic of the Philippines will expound on the significance and relevance of this important initiative that our two countries have jointly led over the past few years. We believe that this initiative, which has gradually gained the support of the wider membership, addresses one of the most urgent needs of our time.

The world around us is still afflicted with extremist ideologies, mutual suspicion and mistrust. Much of it can be attributed to the lack of effective communication and dialogue and the consequent lack of understanding and respect for the various religions and cultures of the world. All nations must continue to engage in a constructive, genuine and sincere interreligious and intercultural dialogue at all levels. Such a dialogue will help us overcome the unfounded but deeply entrenched fears that stem from a lack of proper understanding of each other’s perspectives. The dialogue should be pursued in a structured and organized manner. It should include religious leaders and institutions, local and national Governments, regional and international organizations, civil society and the media. Our ultimate objective is to prevent conflict around the world through moderation and a global culture of peace.

Theological and cultural differences notwithstanding, religions and cultures have much in common that can actually unite us. We should build on those commonalities for promoting religious and cultural harmony within and among societies and nations. Religious and cultural diversity is a positive driving force that can meaningfully contribute to the socioeconomic development of multicultural societies all around the world.

We greatly appreciate all steps and initiatives being taken by various Governments and organizations at different levels, as mentioned in the Secretary-General’s report of this year (A/68/286).

We particularly appreciate the important role being played by UNESCO and civil society in that regard and encourage them to continue their valuable efforts for the common good of humankind. It is our belief that, through increased dialogue and better understanding, it is possible to achieve the objective of having a diversified yet harmonious and peaceful world standing

solidly on the pillars of peaceful coexistence and unity in diversity.

The draft resolution has been discussed thoroughly for nearly a week at the expert level in informal consultations. Those consultations were held in a collegial and cooperative atmosphere, with an open mind and flexibility. That has enriched the draft resolution and enabled us to achieve a balanced draft text that reflects the points of view of all partners. The sponsors convey their deepest gratitude to our partners for their constructive contribution in further streamlining and strengthening the draft resolution.

It is our hope that the draft text will be adopted by consensus and that more States will join us as sponsors this time.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.30.

Mr. De Vega (Philippines): The Philippines, together with Pakistan, is again very honoured to introduce the draft resolution entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/68/L.30), under agenda item 15, entitled “Culture of peace”.

Nine years ago, we resolved to pursue universal peace through greater understanding of our diversity in religions as well as cultures. It seemed such a daunting task. But, on 11 November 2004, that initiative was unanimously adopted as the landmark resolution 59/23. The resolution was entitled simply “Promotion of interreligious dialogue”. It had five preambular paragraphs and only three operative paragraphs. Essentially, it affirmed that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constituted important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace.

The resolution opened the door for this body to engage in partnership with civil society in general and the religious sector in particular. Since then, our initiative, our vision, has grown from strength to strength, garnering wider participation and ownership by more and more stakeholders.

Allow us to join the representative of Pakistan in thanking the Member States that have traditionally sponsored and supported this draft resolution throughout the years. Allow us also to welcome and

thank those Member States that are sponsoring the draft resolution for the first time.

After three rounds of informal consultations facilitated by Pakistan and the Philippines from 2 to 4 December, the final draft text was put to a silence procedure up to 9 December, and the silence was not broken. As mentioned by the representative of Pakistan, a genuine dialogue of openness and constructiveness characterized the consultations. We worked with candour and honesty, yet also with understanding and flexibility. We were animated by the spirit of cooperation. Clearly, that is the essence of the draft resolution. We listened to one another. We understood and respected the position of each of us.

This year's draft resolution continues to be a well-balanced text. It builds on nearly a decade of experience. Its 17 preambular paragraphs and 18 operative paragraphs benefit not only from the usual technical updates but also from a broader and more inclusive perspective that would allow us to more widely and more sustainably address our common challenges. Let me take the body through some of the most notable features of the draft resolution.

First, it includes technical updates from UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency, on a plan of action to implement 2013-2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. It will be recalled that we proclaimed the Decade last year through resolution 67/104.

Second, it commends the ideas suggested at the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, held in Paris on 19 November 2012, to help identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation.

Third, it welcomes the continuing work of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on interfaith dialogue, in particular the ASEM Vientiane Declaration of 6 November 2012 and the ASEM High-level International Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue, which will be held in Saint Petersburg in July 2014.

Fourth, it also welcomes the deepening engagement of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, particularly the Sixth Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which will be held in Bali, Indonesia, in August 2014.

Fifth, it welcomes the work of the Anna Lindh Foundation in contributing to the Dialogue process.

Sixth, it refers to beliefs, cultures, religions and faiths, with a view towards discussing common issues and objectives and in so doing reach a broader audience and engender a wider ownership of the Dialogue.

Seventh, it acknowledges that individuals can make a positive contribution to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

Eighth, and finally, we rearranged a few of the preambular and operative paragraphs with already agreed language from previous years' resolutions, moving the general ones to the beginning.

In addition to the participating Member States, we also wish to thank participating observer missions, such as the Holy See, and the representatives of intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, for their very wise and valuable contributions.

I also offer thanks to the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the General Assembly Affairs Branch for the technical assistance they have extended.

I cannot overemphasize the value of what we continue to do in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and how that dialogue serves as the foundation for a just and lasting peace. Without peace there can be no sustainable development. For that reason, I speak for the Philippines and, perhaps, other Member States that are also sponsors and supporters of Iran's draft resolution, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism" (A/68/L.31), and the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Bangladesh, entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace" (A/68/L.28). Our three initiatives complement and build on each other.

Let me end by paying tribute to the late President Nelson Mandela. Madiba embodied the highest values of the United Nations. By his life and example, Madiba reminded us that education is the most powerful tool in promoting peace through interreligious and intercultural dialogue. He said,

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can

learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

On behalf of Pakistan and the other sponsors, I have the distinct honour of joining in the call for the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Ms. Ibrahim (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose members are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, I have the honour to deliver this statement under the agenda item entitled “Culture of peace”.

Throughout the centuries, South-East Asia has always attracted visitors from all over the world who have brought their cultures and religious influences. As a result, ours is a region rich in culture, one that is ethnically and religiously diverse. ASEAN views its great heritage positively, and we unreservedly embrace our uniqueness, especially as we work together to achieve an ASEAN Community by 2015.

ASEAN also gives priority to promoting dialogue and mutual understanding to that end. We view that diversity as an essential element for economic and social development and for maintaining peace and security in the region. ASEAN will therefore continue to hold high regard and respect for a culture of peace through initiatives such as the Global Movement of Moderates (GMM).

Embracing moderation is an important ASEAN value. It was thanks to the practice and recognition of the importance of moderation in the region that, on 3 April 2012, at the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, ASEAN leaders unanimously adopted the GMM initiative, which essentially calls on the voices of moderation, made up of the silent majority, to drown out the voices of extremism in all forms, to reclaim the centre and moral high ground. We believe that the real divide in the world today is not between East and West, between developed and developing countries, or between Muslims and non-Muslims. Instead, the fault line lies between moderates and extremists of all religions and beliefs, and in all areas and aspects. We therefore encourage our people, especially our youth, to be socially responsible and care for one another despite their differences. We also continue to educate them on the value of respecting those who come from

different religious and cultural backgrounds, which we do through various means, including the use of information and communications technology, such as the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal established by the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010.

ASEAN has also embarked on a regional project called the ASEAN Young Professionals Volunteer Corps, which aims to provide assistance in various projects in the areas of rural development, poverty eradication, education, agriculture, health and environmental matters. We believe the programme can promote dialogue and interaction among the young people of ASEAN and strengthen cultural and religious understanding.

Besides our own regional cooperation, ASEAN is also active in other forums, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). We welcomed the outcome of the seventh ASEM Interfaith Dialogue, held in the Philippines on 13 and 14 October 2011, which focused on harnessing benefits and addressing challenges of migration through interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

At the international level, we are pleased that the General Assembly continues to support two important draft resolutions, namely, those entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/68/L.30) and “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” (A/68/L.28). Both of those draft resolutions are being sponsored by all ASEAN member States. We also recognize the significance of a new draft resolution entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism” (A/68/L.31). The three draft resolutions are to be adopted by consensus and indicate the commitment of States Members of the United Nations to work together in this area. We hope the draft resolutions will continue to facilitate and provide for our combined efforts towards peacebuilding.

ASEAN appreciates the various efforts of the United Nations undertaken to promote a culture of peace, particularly the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In promoting a culture of peace through the work of the Alliance, the United Nations has collaborated with various Member States, which ASEAN welcomes. ASEAN also welcomes the sixth Meeting of the Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which will be held in

Bali, Indonesia, in August 2014, and we encourage the participation there of all States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and civil society organizations.

In conclusion, ASEAN would like to express its appreciation for the contributions of one of South Africa's great leaders, the late Nelson Mandela, who helped to raise global awareness on the culture of peace. To that end, ASEAN will do whatever it can to support peace efforts, which are the very foundation of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

All the draft resolutions before us today are important. We thank the main sponsors for their efforts. I would like to say a few words on draft resolution A/68/L.31, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism." The European Union would like to thank the Islamic Republic of Iran for the constructive and open spirit in which it led the consultation process. We also appreciate the inclusion of many of the European Union's proposals.

The European Union and its member States are very much engaged in the fight against terrorism. In a broader context, we also acknowledge the importance of fighting violent extremism. We are convinced of the utmost importance of respecting all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law while countering terrorism. That is also a priority for the EU and its member States when addressing violent extremism. We welcome the emphasis that the draft resolution to be adopted today puts on that dimension. We reaffirm that violent extremism can be overcome only by measures that adhere to the highest human rights standards and are in full compliance with the rule of law.

We wish to call on all States to reinforce efforts in countering violent extremism and ensure full respect for all human rights for all persons. Words should become reality. We welcome the Islamic Republic of Iran's efforts to contribute to what the peoples of the United Nations expressed in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, ending the scourge of wars, reaffirming fundamental human rights, abiding by the rule of law and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): Malaysia wishes to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on agenda item 15, entitled "Culture of Peace." In addition, allow me to deliver some remarks in my national capacity.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" (A/68/286). I also wish to express our appreciation to the Director General of UNESCO for her report on the follow-up to the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (see A/68/216). In addition, we welcome the sixth annual report of the High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (see A/68/361). Those reports chronicle important efforts by the United Nations system to promote a global culture of peace and non-violence, both within and beyond national borders.

Malaysia commends the work of UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations, as well as other United Nations entities and initiatives in pursuit of true understanding and tolerance to bridge divides and help overcome prejudices through intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We also commend the efforts undertaken to instil values related to the culture of peace through education and the focus on youth involvement. It is in full support of those undertakings that Malaysia sponsored the draft resolution on the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue (A/68/L.30).

In addition to action within the United Nations system, we would also like to highlight the contribution that the concept of moderation can add in efforts to promote a culture of peace. In 2010, the Prime Minister of Malaysia called on the silent majority of moderates to come together in a global movement to reclaim centre stage from the loud voices of hatred and

extremism. Three years on, neither the relevance nor the urgency of that call has subsided. The international community remains gripped by violent conflicts across the world perpetrated by extremists who choose to spread their ideology by sowing discord, instilling fear and committing terrorism. Now more than ever, the collective voices of moderates need to be heard in order to quell the extremist rhetoric that completely contradicts the culture of peace, one that is so vital for lasting stability, security and development.

While the call for a global movement of moderates is fairly recent, moderation itself is an age-old, living principle that is embodied in all the great religions. In advocating the middle path between extremes, moderation is an approach that emphasizes the universal values of mutual respect, understanding, tolerance and compassion, which are key ingredients in cultivating a culture of peace.

We need not look far for vivid examples of moderation in action. The world is mourning the loss of President Nelson Mandela, who exemplified, among many other virtues, those of forgiveness and conciliation. It is testimony to his sense of moderation and his leadership that no bloody retribution took place in South Africa for all the evils and injustices perpetrated against the majority of South Africans during the apartheid regime. Rather, he called for reconciliation and national healing, charting a middle path that brought together the long-divided people of South Africa.

Moderation is also reflected in the conduct of Malala Yousufzai, the young Pakistani who defends the right of all children, including girls, to education. Despite being viciously attacked by extremists for her ideals, she refused to be silenced and continues to fight for the noble cause of universal education with courage beyond her years. That, in turn, has garnered massive support and awareness. Malala's example is evidence that moderation and standing up to extremism is not about being weak or about appeasement, but empowers people to leave a mark for good.

The Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) is a sincere effort to channel in a massive way the courage and spirit shown by Nelson Mandela and Malala Yousufzai. In the three years since its inception, the GMM has received far-reaching support from countries and groupings across the world. In particular, ASEAN has endorsed and adopted the GMM in recognition of moderation as a central value of the ASEAN

way. It underpins the interaction of our multiracial, multicultural and multireligious communities in which we prioritize the peaceful resolution of disputes. The noteworthy absence of wars and armed conflict among neighbours in the region is testament to ASEAN's commitment to upholding moderate values that promote mutual trust and confidence and predispose one to dialogue and negotiation as the key means of resolving disputes.

The idea of the GMM has also received the support of many others, as can be seen from the various outcome documents of a number of international meetings and conferences of organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Commonwealth and the Asia-Europe Meeting. We hope that the initiative will continue to receive greater support in the years to come.

Malaysia believes that the GMM as a whole can complement the mission and work of the United Nations system at various levels in the promotion of a culture of peace. We are pleased to note that the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation, a nongovernmental organization based in Malaysia to further the cause of moderation in pursuit of peace, is working together with the Alliance of Civilizations to promote better understanding of the concept of moderation and its contribution to enhanced respect and dialogue among religions, cultures and beliefs.

In conclusion, the obstacles that prevent a culture of peace from taking root are many, but they are not insurmountable. We believe that moderation and a global movement of moderates can make a valuable contribution to the overall efforts to achieve the culture of peace that is vital to sustaining the development and prosperity that all countries desire.

Ms. AlGharabally (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his work in preparing the report before us today (A/68/286), which covers the issues and activities considered by the principal United Nations entities in their efforts to encourage dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions and cultures for the sake of peace. My country also commends the efforts, good offices and pivotal role of the United Nations educational and cultural body, UNESCO, to entrench a culture of peace, which has helped to create an environment conducive to that culture through the preparation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. We

should also like to thank the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for all his efforts, and for his presentation of the sixth annual report on the Alliance of Civilizations (see A/68/361), including the main activities and progress being made in that regard. And we should not fail to thank all the Member States that have sponsored the draft resolutions calling for the promotion of a culture of peace and encourage understanding, dialogue and cooperation between religions and cultures in order to promote tolerance and respect for cultural differences as a way to prevent conflict (A/68/L.28, A/68/L.30 and A/68/L.31).

The first words of the Charter of the United Nations are “We the peoples” — we, the different peoples, born of different environments, with our own cultures, civilizations and beliefs, living in one world and together forming human civilization. The State of Kuwait therefore attaches the utmost importance to promoting a culture of peace and encouraging dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations, particularly today, when waves of extremism, fundamentalism and hatred among peoples have led to increasing violations of human rights and to racial discrimination and contempt for others and their religions.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that dialogues and alliances among civilizations do not imply the creation of a melting pot of religions, beliefs or even cultures. A civilization is the vessel that contains the religions and cultures and beliefs of peoples, and the objective of a dialogue among civilizations is to consider the roots of differences, to deal with them, learn about the ethics of the differences between one another and stand humbly before them. That is why my country stresses the importance of intensifying efforts to promote a culture of peace, reactivate the dialogue among cultures, spread the values of moderation, tolerance and mutual respect and renounce extremism, hatred and violence in all its forms and manifestations. That is the responsibility of all Member States and international organizations.

The State of Kuwait is eager to support the efforts of the Organization because we believe in the noble principles of the Charter and look forward to a more effective international role in the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations. In that context, I would like to mention the practical, positive steps that have been taken in Kuwait to implement a dialogue among civilizations.

We subscribed to that initiative and joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance early on, making a reality of our belief in the importance of a continuing dialogue and interaction among peoples and civilizations. In that regard, Kuwait has established a national plan in accordance with the objectives of the initiative, aimed at entrenching a culture of tolerance, peace and moderation and confronting the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and violence. An international centre for moderation has been established in Kuwait to call for moderation in thinking about and dealing with one another.

Peace was a longstanding cultural aspect of Kuwaiti society even before the establishment of the modern State, reflecting acceptance of others, tolerance, dialogue with other cultures and religions and openness to all peoples and civilizations. Today in our modern State, the Constitution of Kuwait assures and guarantees the freedom of opinion, expression, belief and religious rituals freely and safely. The State of Kuwait, although small in size, has been a meeting place for peaceful peoples, where more than 120 nationalities live in harmony, stability, dignity and peace.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress that enriching a culture of peace is a process that demands belief and serious work in order to realize that culture’s principles — respect for human rights and freedom of expression and opinion, as well as justice, equality and the fight against poverty and unemployment. It is impossible for a people whose basic rights are being violated to enjoy peace and non-violence. We therefore urge that all such rights be respected and implemented so that we may live in a world of amity, tolerance and peace.

Ms. Al-Jefairi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank the President for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/68/286), and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his report (see A/68/361) and for the efforts he and his Office have made in that regard. I would also like to express our particular appreciation for his work to intensify the Alliance’s efforts through self-evaluation and the presentation of new proposals and ideas.

Needless to say, peace has been one of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations since its inception. Achieving that goal is unquestionably enormously complex, since the world now faces so

many conflicts and changes. The Assembly might agree with our belief that most such conflicts stem from issues that require shared effort in order for us to renounce violence, deal with its underlying causes and spread a culture of peace among peoples and societies. Hence the importance of dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions and cultures in order to achieve peace. We therefore very much appreciate the efforts being made by the main United Nations bodies in this area, particularly UNESCO, to make the objectives, commitments, resolutions and international declarations on the culture of peace a concrete reality, especially this year, which is considered the beginning of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

The United Nations Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace stresses the importance of basing efforts on two fundamental pillars, namely, development and human rights. Since a culture of peace must be made up of a number of values, aspects and human behaviours based on the renunciation of violence, respect for people's fundamental rights and social participation in development, we believe that the environment we should establish in the international community can be summarized as follows. Those principles are: resolving conflicts through mediation and without violence, ensuring human rights for all and promoting national institutions in that field, realizing that the culture of peace is an extension of democracy, ensuring the participation of all segments of society in national development, promoting national capacities to avoid great economic and social differences and combating poverty, recognizing a common responsibility in building the culture of peace, encouraging activities in support of human rights, implementing peace as a process through formal and informal education, using all available means to achieve peace, and ensuring a broader role for educators in the field of the promotion of a culture of peace.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have worked to spread the culture of peace nationally and internationally. We have called for an exchange of experience and practices in that regard. In that respect, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue has been created.

Qatar was one of the first States to support the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and has done so since its inception. We hosted the Alliance's

fourth Global Forum, which plays an effective role in combating polarization and extremism by promoting tolerance and cultural diversity within and among societies.

The State of Qatar has also made many efforts to resolve conflicts through mediation based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Such efforts have lessened tensions that were, in many cases, threats to international peace and security.

In the light of the role that education plays in the promotion of peace, my country has set itself the priority task of raising the level of education and of mainstreaming the culture of peace in curriculums at all levels. In our assistance to children, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned has launched an international initiative entitled "Educate a Child", which aims at providing primary education to millions of children in countries suffering from conflict and war. Under the initiative, 25 projects have been set up in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for about 500,000 children.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its commitment to work with the General Assembly and all United Nations bodies to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Mr. Sapkul (Thailand): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/68/PV.66).

Thailand thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/68/286) on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and thanks the Director General of UNESCO for the report on follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. My delegation acknowledges the commitment and active role of United Nations entities, particularly UNESCO, in taking the lead in mainstreaming the idea of a culture of peace in their activities. My delegation also expresses our appreciation to the former and current High Representatives for the Alliance of Civilizations, His Excellency Mr. Jorge Sampaio and His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for their dedication and continued advocacy of cultural diversity.

The promotion of the culture of peace encompasses several dimensions. Let me share some of our thoughts with the Assembly.

First, we are living in an increasingly globalized, interconnected and interdependent world, where civilizations, cultures and religions meet, interact and sometimes come into conflict. Thailand has therefore supported the promotion of the culture of peace and interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue. By doing so, people of different cultures and religions will have a better understanding of one another, thus creating mutual respect and tolerance.

In that regard, Thailand thanks the Government of Austria for hosting the fifth Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum in February 2013. The Vienna Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations reaffirms the common political will among nations to promote tolerance, pluralism and mutual respect.

Secondly, it is our belief that love, kindness and compassion are the basic elements of all religions, that peace is the ultimate common goal and that every religion can coexist peacefully. Given all of that, it is puzzling to witness interreligious violence and conflicts. Are they caused by a misinterpretation of the essence of religion? If so, there is definitely a need for a deeper and true understanding of the core of religions, faiths and beliefs. We therefore strongly urge political and religious leaders to promote mutual respect and tolerance and to bridge the gap in understanding among people of different religions, faiths or beliefs through interfaith and interreligious dialogue.

The Asia-Pacific is one of the most diverse regions in terms of religious communities, and Thailand sees the need for regional interfaith dialogue. We have actively participated in such dialogues. The Thai Government has also established a working group on regional interfaith dialogue that embraces all stakeholders and encourages them to work together, build networks in order to enhance interfaith dialogue activities in Thailand and strengthen international interfaith partnership abroad.

Thirdly, Thailand believes that peace lies in the hands of our future generation. Therefore, we attach importance to cultivating a culture of peace among young people. Last October, our Ministry of Culture organized a religious youth service cultural camp. In addition, a number of intercultural and interreligious projects have been initiated by several universities and civil society organizations. We also welcome the outcome of the fifth Youth Peace Ambassador Training Workshop, held in Thailand in November 2012 by UNESCO in cooperation with our civil society

organizations. Those are some examples of our strong determination to promote a culture of peace.

Fourthly, we share the view that women are agents of peace and can significantly contribute to conflict resolution. In line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, Thailand has actively promoted the role of women in the culture of peace and security. A subcommittee on women and the promotion of peace and security was established in September 2012. It aims to assist, protect and empower women who have been affected by conflict and violence. In addition, peace ambassadors from the Thai chapter of the Universal Peace Federation, a non-governmental organization with consultative status in the Economic and Social Council, actively took part in the Global Women's Peace Network, which was launched in Bangkok in September.

Fifthly, we recognize the role of the media in advocating a culture of peace. However, the role and influence of the media can be a two-edged sword. The media must be encouraged to make impartial judgments and to take full responsibility when disseminating information. The media must play an increasing role in eliminating hatred and prejudice, must promote better understanding among people and must strongly oppose violence. The media must also be a bearer of peace.

Lastly, Thailand agrees wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General that interreligious and intercultural dialogues are closely connected to the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. We therefore support the idea of streamlining the content of related activities on those issues into one comprehensive report, rather than several separate reports. Not only will that be more cost-effective, but it will not unduly burden United Nations entities or Member States.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Thailand's continued support for a culture of peace. Thailand has been a traditional sponsor of draft resolutions under this agenda item. This year, we are one of the Member States that have sponsored all three draft resolutions under this item. It is our hope that all three of them will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to participate in this debate on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue for peace, a goal to which Morocco accords particular importance and that constitutes a main vector of the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Morocco.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, new High Representative of the Alliance, for their efforts to spread a culture of peace, dialogue and respect for differences.

We have noted with great interest the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/286) relating to the main activities conducted by United Nations organizations over the past year for the promotion of dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions. Those activities touched upon several dimensions of that dialogue and several regions of the world, thereby demonstrating ownership by the entire international community of that goal, which is so important for peace, security and international cooperation.

The cross-cutting and complex nature of this topic explains and justifies the central involvement of UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations, as well as other agencies, such as the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Others such as UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration bring added value to the pursuit of that goal. We hope and are confident that they will bring their contributions to bear.

We welcome the fact that many programmes and projects on education, youth, media and migration have been implemented and that several action plans have been elaborated, including the Rabat Plan of Action of 2012, which specifically seeks to prevent any form of incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. The Global Forums of the Alliance of Civilizations held in Doha and Vienna led to the development of a strategy for the period 2013 to 2018 that encompasses six areas for action, including youth, the consolidation of partnerships, conflict prevention and concerning financing and the structure of the Alliance. Moreover, a number of important initiatives were developed to strengthen objective, transparent and constructive dialogue among civilizations.

Having said that, advocating for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation and organizing meetings dedicated

to that goal will unfortunately, in and of themselves, not be sufficient to establish and develop a culture of peace. The ownership of that goal by each Member State and within each State by the various departments concerned and by civil society, as well as the adoption of measures to combat extremism, intolerance and prejudice towards other communities and religions, are a necessary and indispensable complement and the basis of a genuine policy for the promotion of dialogue and the coexistence of civilizations in daily life. That task and that responsibility are becoming ever more urgent in the current context of weakening reference points and rising extremism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination. As His Majesty the King stressed recently in a message to a addressed to the international conference that was held in Fez on 2 October,

“The strengthening of dialogue among cultures and civilizations and respect for cultural diversity will not be able to become a reality without national foundations that enable ownership by each citizen of those noble goals.”

Since its launch, in 2005, the Alliance of Civilizations, with its 138 members, including Morocco, has promoted dialogue among civilizations and a rapprochement of peoples and cultures, as well as a narrowing of the divide in relations among nations. The Alliance of Civilizations has proven to be an effective instrument and a fundamental platform that advances sound values based on mutual understanding and respect, tolerance and intercultural dialogue, while at the same time condemning the fusion of religions, extremism and violence. However, that progress cannot be consolidated and made sustainable without resolving conflicts and establishing a global partnership for the achievement by all nations, small, middle-sized and large, of the Millennium Development Goals. There is therefore a very close relationship, on the one hand, between peace through dialogue, understanding and respect for the identity and specific characteristics of others, and, on the other, the realization by all of the Millennium Development Goals, which will permit social relations to be eased and fundamental needs to be met, thereby creating fertile ground for an opening towards others and acceptance of their specific characteristics.

We hope that the designation of 2013-2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures will substantially contribute to the

emergence of a genuine culture of tolerance, dialogue and understanding among Member States. I can assure you, Sir, that the Kingdom of Morocco will remain a committed and determined partner for the implementation of that strategy.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to address agenda item 15, “Culture of peace”, which has always been of great importance to the people and Government of El Salvador in both its domestic and its international dimensions. We believe that this issue of great importance as a theme that encompasses all three pillars of the work of the United Nations: international peace and security, development, and the promotion and protection of human rights.

We also welcome the draft resolutions that we will adopt today by consensus, and we recognize the contribution of Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan and the Philippines in the work undertaken in these negotiations.

El Salvador, a State member of the Central American Integration System (SICA), has historically been a catalyst of the unity of Central America and greater nation. Along with the region as a whole, it has come a long way since the late 1980s via the Contadora Group process and the Esquipulas Agreement in strengthening its status as a zone of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

Our country suffered an internal armed conflict that caused our people a great deal of pain. It is for that reason that we reject any shady attempt to involve the people and Government of El Salvador in a warlike conflict that could set back the democratic process of the Central American region.

El Salvador expresses its unyielding position as a staunch advocate for a peaceful settlement of differences through dialogue and understanding, which is why we have been considered within the United Nations as a model for peacebuilding for other countries. We have participated intensely in various peacekeeping operations around the world as a faithful reflection of our nation’s commitment to that matter. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission for the biennium 2012-2013, which is coming to a close, we have been able to offer our cooperation and experience in peace and negotiation processes in numerous conflicts around the world. We are always committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In the regional sphere, El Salvador has fostered the implementation of and effective compliance with the new regional security model instituted in the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, which establishes the principles and mechanisms to sustain the peacebuilding process and democracy in the region.

El Salvador wishes to reiterate to the international community its firm commitment to the consolidation of the Central American economic integration process, and its faithful adherence to and good faith in its international obligations and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of American States. We also wish to make it clear that, together with our sister republics of the Central American region, we are bound by historic, economic, social and cultural ties. We share the same ideals and a common future.

In conclusion, El Salvador expresses its unconditional support for and joins the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially in its Management of Social Transformations Programme and its theme “Promoting equity and social inclusion: pathways to prosperity for all”. That initiative allows us to evaluate progress, identify good practices and lessons learned, and assess difficulties that arise in that field; it is a methodology that can be applied in our country, with particular attention to women and men with disabilities.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 45/6, of 16 October 1990, I now call on the Permanent Observer of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Lobry-Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/68/286) and of the Director-General of UNESCO on the implementation of the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (see A/68/216), as well as the progress described in the latter report. Specifically, the IFRC agrees with the Secretary-General’s statement that

“peace cannot be reduced to the mere absence of conflict, and [that] it requires positive dispositions towards such values as respect for dignity and

diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding” (A/68/216, para. 64).

The IFRC is strongly committed to fostering a global culture of respect for peace and non-violence, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion in which human values and dignity are truly celebrated. Indeed, promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace is one of our three strategic aims for the present decade. Over the past year, we have highlighted the vulnerabilities of three specific groups in that regard: women in conflict and disaster settings, people with disabilities and migrants.

In last year’s debate on the subject of agenda item 15, the IFRC highlighted the serious issue of interpersonal and self-directed violence during and after disasters, and the role that the Red Cross and Red Crescent can play and is playing in protecting and assisting vulnerable populations (see A/67/PV.58). Yet, as was reaffirmed at the nineteenth session of the General Assembly of the IFRC, which was held in Sydney, Australia, and brought together our 189 member national societies, the most specific sexual and gender-based violence is still shrouded in silence and stigmatization.

Sexual and gender-based violence is often a continuum of a pre-existing situation of vulnerabilities and risks, discrimination and violence. Exacerbated by conditions of conflict and disasters, it is perpetrated against women, girls, boys and men. We must not turn a blind eye to the survivors, but instead step up our collective efforts to prevent violence and to ensure that those who survive violence do not suffer the double burden of discrimination and lack of access to necessary support.

The IFRC is intent on promoting the social inclusion and the human value and dignity of the more than 1 billion of us living with disabilities. We welcome the increased attention towards people living with disabilities and the commitments made by Member States during the General Assembly’s High-level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities” (see A/68/PV.3), at which they recommitted themselves to taking national and international action to support disability-inclusive development. Furthermore, on 13 October, the International Day for Disaster Reduction focused on disability and reinforced the message of the inclusion of people with disability in the context of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The IFRC stands ready to work with Governments to reduce the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities. At the nineteenth session of its General Assembly in Sydney last month, the IFRC adopted a resolution emphasizing that persons with disabilities often face barriers to their social inclusion, full and effective participation, and economic development, which can have a negative impact on their opportunity to engage in education and employment, impair access to health services and lead to increasing poverty.

The resolution further calls on the Movement’s components to take all necessary measures to seek to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities, particularly in situations of risk, including not only situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters, but also in times of peace. In addition, the resolution urges all of the Movement’s components to work with Governments, including through appropriate humanitarian diplomacy, to help address the needs of persons with disabilities and implement the relevant instruments of international law to support the rights of persons with disabilities, address discrimination, change perceptions and combat stereotypes and prejudice.

The IFRC took great interest in the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in October and in the strong condemnation contained in its outcome document of acts, manifestations and expression of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants and the stereotypes often applied to them, including on the basis of religion or belief. The IFRC strongly supports the call for States to apply and where needed, reinforce existing laws where xenophobic and intolerant acts, manifestations or expressions against migrants occur, in order to prevent impunity for those who commit those acts.

The 2011 IFRC strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response identified migrants as one of the categories of people at particular risk of violence. With regard to migration, studies have shown that violence is interrelated with overpopulation, high stress levels, a lack of policing and security, a lack of safe sanitation facilities, high levels of alcohol and other substance abuse, few livelihood opportunities, chaotic environments, and feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness.

Displacement increases with factors that could lead to suicidal behaviour. Refugees who are grieving or have significant stress are at risk of committing suicide. Furthermore, migrant women, especially those in irregular situations, are particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced begging, slavery and many other forms of exploitation.

The IFRC, with a network of 189 national societies is committed to preventing violence, victimization and the exploitation of migrant women and their families. We work along migratory trails to combat and prevent the risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation in countries of origin, xenophobia and other forms of violence during transit, and violence and labour exploitation in destination countries. We work alongside Governments to ensure that the protection and assistance needs of all migrants, irrespective of their legal status, are met.

In conclusion, the IFRC wants to echo the emphasis placed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the positive requirements for peace. Nurturing, living and celebrating values such as respect for dignity and diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding all start by promoting skills and value-based education. We believe in the value of formal and non-formal education in empowering people with skills to save lives and change minds and hearts. We believe that members of societies all over the world can learn how to operate and relate to each other from a values framework that they own, in which they believe, that gives meaning to their lives, that fosters well-being, happiness and peace, and through which there is hope for their children and grandchildren to live in a peaceful, inclusive and caring society.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 15.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/68/L.28, A/68/L.30 and A/68/L.31. In connection with draft resolution A/68.L.31, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.31, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism", I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure.

Under paragraph 14 of draft resolution A/68/L.31, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the implementation of the resolution and to recommend ways and means by which the United Nations system and the Secretariat could assist Member States, upon their request and within existing resources, in generating public awareness about the danger of intolerance as well as fostering understanding and non-violence.

It is anticipated that the request contained in operative paragraph 4 would involve, in addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), one document of 8,500 words, to be issued in all languages. This would entail additional requirements in the amount of \$50,900 for documentation services in 2015. While no provision for the requested activity has been made under the proposed programme budgets for 2014-2015, all possible efforts will be made to absorb the additional requirements of \$50,900 from within the existing resources under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the period 2014-2015.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/68/L.31, additional requirements of \$50,900 would arise under section 2 ("General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management"), of the proposed programme budget for biennium 2014-2015. However, all possible efforts will be made to absorb the additional requirements of \$50,900 from within the existing resources under section 2 and to report thereon in the context of the performance report for 2014-2015.

The Acting President: The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.28, entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.28, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jamaica, Kazakhstan,

Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, the Niger, Oman, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Suriname, Tonga, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.28?

Draft resolution A/68/L.28 was adopted (resolution 68/125).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.30, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.30, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Algeria, Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Hungary, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Myanmar, Peru, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Thailand, Togo and Tunisia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.30?

Draft resolution A/68/L.30 was adopted (resolution 68/126).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.31, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.31, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Ecuador, India, Iraq, Japan, Libya, Montenegro, Nicaragua,

the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.31?

Draft resolution A/68/L.31 was adopted (resolution 68/127).

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

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on resolution 68/126, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”. The European Union would like to extend its thanks to the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines for the very constructive spirit in which they led the consultation process.

The European Union expresses appreciation for the efforts of the main sponsors to take into account some of the remaining concerns raised in previous years. We appreciate in particular the addition of the new fourteenth preambular paragraph, which acknowledges the positive contribution individuals and representatives of groups play in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The European Union continues to attach importance to always mentioning religion and belief in conjunction. We also appreciate the main sponsors’ willingness to strengthen language on the role of civil society, especially in paragraph 14, when listing the actors the United Nations should actively engage with in the context of intercultural dialogue.

In the promotion of intercultural dialogue, we attach great importance to the work done by UNESCO, which is the lead agency in the promotion of intercultural dialogue, as well as other initiatives for enhancing dialogue and mutual understanding, such as the Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Foundation. While the States members of the European Union acknowledge that the text has continued to improve over the years, we trust that its sponsors will look positively into the suggestion of making the draft resolution a biennial initiative.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): I refer my statement to resolution 68/127. The Iranian theocracy has presented

a resolution that is riddled with hypocrisy. By putting it forward, Iran seeks to ride the wave towards international legitimacy, but Iran's aspirations cannot be allowed to drown out the cries of its people who are victims of a regime that pretends to be progressive, but in truth is tragically regressive.

Iran's calls for nations to denounce violence and extremism could easily fill the pages of an absurdist fiction. I would suggest that the Iranians borrow a phrase from the London tube and caution readers of the resolution to "mind the gap" between the document's aspirations and the situation in Iran.

Not long ago, the *Washington Post* published an article written by Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner. She wrote about Iran's use of torture, media censorship and persecution of religious minorities. While world leaders congratulated themselves on the interim deal reached in Geneva, Ebadi described the scene in Tehran, where

"the lifeless body of a young man hung from a crane in a bleak public square ... spreading fear among Iranians, who suffer the world's highest per capita rate of executions".

Resolution 68/127 implores nations to ensure a violence-free life for their people, while fully respecting their human rights. Yet Iran is one of the world's worst human rights abusers. It is a regime that hangs gays, stones women, imprisons journalists and executes political opponents. Reading through the document before the Assembly, it was not clear to me whether I was reading a United Nations resolution or President Rouhani's New Year resolution. After all, Iran is the world's primary sponsor of terror, responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent civilians from Bangkok to Burgas and Buenos Aires. It is also the principal supplier of weapons in the Middle East, igniting conflicts and inflaming sectarian divides.

Iran continues to lend its financial, military and political support to murderous groups such as Hizbullah and Hamas. Those terrorist organizations have dispatched hundreds of suicide bombers, planted thousands of bombs and fired tens of thousands of missiles at innocent civilians. Just this weekend, President Rouhani provided another example of Iranian hypocrisy when he tweeted:

"Countries that provide arms and training to terrorists have created crisis in the region and

will eventually be caught up in this support for terrorism".

Can we believe this? When I read it, I thought I was reading pages from *Alice in Wonderland*, not Rouhani's Twitter feed. It reminded me of a serial killer lecturing us all on the sanctity of life.

Today's resolution also calls on nations to recognize one another in a display of tolerance. Iran demonstrated that so-called tolerance last week when it took the floor in the General Assembly and refused to recognize Israel, a fellow State Member of the United Nations. Nonetheless, Israel joined the consensus to demonstrate its support for the ideals set out in the resolution and for the Iranian people. In doing so, Israel is putting people before politics in the hope that others will follow our example.

The resolution sets the bar high. Now it is up to the international community to ensure that Iran measures up.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): The United States firmly supports efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation, as set forth in resolution 68/126. We are pleased to be joining the consensus on the resolution.

The United States believes strongly in encouraging a culture of peace through the adoption and promotion of values based on freedom, justice, democracy and human rights and that reject violence and address the root causes of conflict. We are encouraged by this consensus-based effort to promote tolerance, dialogue, reconciliation and respect for cultural diversity. As a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious nation, we also believe that dialogue, understanding and cooperation among and between members of different religious and cultural backgrounds is important to the development of peaceful and harmonious relations between groups and States.

We understand that resolution 68/126, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, reaffirms the international community's recognition that article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (resolution 2200A (XXI)), in its entirety, provides the international framework for the protection of freedom of expression. In that regard, the United States reaffirms its well-known position that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression should be afforded the maximum possible protection. The

United States would like to recall that at the time of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on the Alliance of Civilizations, welcomed by this resolution, we expressed concern about the 2006 *Report of the High-level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations*, and we take this opportunity to restate that concern.

With regard to resolution 68/127, the United States joined the consensus today because we believe in dialogue and agree that fighting violence and violent extremism is an important goal. Today's adoption by consensus in the General Assembly on the Iranian-led resolution entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism" reinforces the importance of engagement regarding our shared interests and a focus that is shifting away from conflict and violence towards diplomatic solutions.

We share the international community's serious concerns about the dangers posed by Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East and beyond. In recent years there has been a clear resurgence of Iran's State sponsorship of terrorism, primarily through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, Iraqi Shia militias and Iran's ally Hizbullah, which all pose a threat to regional stability and use violence to support their aims. That runs counter to efforts to combat violence and violent extremism.

We urge Iran to underscore its commitments, as laid out in this resolution, by prioritizing what Iran's President Rouhani has called prudent moderation and constructive cooperation in its regional policies, in order to help restore peace and stability in the region. Halting its military support to those who perpetuate violence against innocent civilians or contribute to sectarian conflict in the region would do much to give meaning to the sentiments Iran expresses in this resolution.

We understand that the Iranian people have given President Rouhani a mandate to realize their strong desire for a more constructive and moderate course, both at home and abroad. We are encouraged by the progress made so far on the track mapped out by the group of the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, made possible by the work of the international community. We also welcomed President Rouhani's statement during his address to the General Assembly earlier this year, when he said that Iran

"will act responsibly with regard to regional and international security and is willing and prepared to cooperate in these fields ... with other responsible actors" (see A/68/PV.6, p. 15).

We hope to see those words reflected not only in this resolution, but with practical and visible steps from Iran that align its activities with its own stated ideals and those of the international community.

Ms. Ventura (Canada): Canada joined the consensus on resolution 68/127, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism", because it is a strong supporter of human rights and fundamental freedoms and believes that all citizens of the world should be free from discrimination. In order to achieve a world without violence, where human rights and the freedom of all people are respected, we — all of us — must take concrete actions and not rely on words or gestures. In an effort to support the resolution, we urge all States to comply with their international human rights obligations. In particular, we look to the sponsor of the resolution to translate its words into action, to ensure that there is respect for human rights and the fundamental freedom of its people without discrimination of any kind, including for women, ethnic minorities and all religious communities.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

Agenda item 32

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Note verbale dated 9 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Kimberley Process to the General Assembly, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/135 (A/68/649)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.29)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.29.

Mr. Nhlapo (South Africa): Before I introduce draft resolution A/68/L.29, I would like to take a brief moment to thank those who once again this morning, as we have experienced in the past 10 days since the

passing of our former President Nelson Mandela, have expressed the goodwill and support coming from far and wide within Africa and the international community. Our people remain strengthened by those messages of support, and we can assure them that we will continue to uphold the principles that Nelson Mandela fought for until his passing. We urge the international community to give us all necessary support during the next difficult period of our consolidation of the gains of our struggle and our democracy.

I would first of all like to thank the sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.29 for their kind support, but also to say that the draft text is the product of the amendments and discussions that took place during two consultations held last week and that after it was put to the silence procedure. It has therefore been submitted in the current format for consideration by the General Assembly.

Allow me to note that it is a consensus text that is normally adopted by the General Assembly at the end of every year after it has been presented by the current or outgoing Chair of the Kimberley Process. It is therefore in that context that I am introducing the draft resolution, as requested in resolution 67/135, adopted at the previous General Assembly session.

The draft resolution is an update of the one introduced by my predecessor, Ambassador Gillian Milovanovic of the United States, in the Assembly last year. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate her on the work that she has done during her tenure of office, in particular in steering the Kimberley Process through very difficult times and in putting it where it is today. We shall recall that in her report (A/67/640), she noted the progress made in 2012 and some outstanding issues that had to be dealt with in the course of this year. I am therefore happy to say that there has been progress on some of the outstanding issues indicated in the last resolution adopted by the General Assembly.

Let me also point out that there has been an increase in the number of participants in the Kimberley Process. There are now 54 participants representing 81 countries, including 28 members of the European Union represented by the European Commission. The new addition in terms of the membership of the Process is the Republic of Mali, which was accepted as a new member last year. Let me also indicate that some of the new elements of a technical and political nature that are included in the new draft resolution are the outcomes of the eleventh plenary session of the Kimberley Process

final communiqué, hosted in Johannesburg by South Africa from 19 to 22 November.

The Kimberley Process adopted the proposed new rules and procedural norms to regulate the activities of its working bodies. Participants and observers agreed on the streamlining of the procedure for the preparation and adoption of decisions and documents of the Kimberley Process, thereby enhancing its effectiveness in the pursuit of its mandate.

The draft resolution also reflects the progress made by the Kimberley Process to strengthen implementation of the peer review system, increase the transparency and accuracy of statistics, promote research into the traceability of diamonds, promote inclusiveness by broadening the level of involvement by Governments, industry and civil society in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, foster a sense of ownership by participants, improve information and communication flows and enhance the capacity of the Certification Scheme to respond to emerging challenges.

It expresses appreciation to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, the Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa and Viet Nam for receiving review visits or missions in 2013, welcomes the commitment of those countries to continuously open their certification systems to reviews and improvements, and calls upon other participants that have not already done so to make themselves available to receive review visits. It also recognizes the importance of the Kimberley Process in promoting economic development, particularly in the artisanal and small-scale diamond-mining sector, and encourages an increased focus on issues related to development, including through the work of the Diamond Development Initiative.

It further notes the continued cooperation of the Kimberley Process with the United Nations on the issue of diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2101 (2013) of 25 April and in line with the administrative decision on sharing information with the United Nations. Indeed, it goes on to the report of the review mission that went to Côte d'Ivoire and recognizes that Côte d'Ivoire has fulfilled the minimum requirements as far as possibly could be achieved under the United Nations embargo, and recalls that the Security Council, pursuant to its resolution 2101 (2013), will review measures in the light of progress made towards Kimberley Process implementation.

It acknowledges Liberia's involvement in the work carried out by the Kimberley Process regional team for cooperation in the Mano River region, encourages the Kimberley Process, in collaboration with the Panel of Experts on Liberia, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2025 (2011) of 14 December 2011, to support the efforts of Liberia to continue reinforcing its internal controls system and to continue to address the challenges to the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, and takes note of the review visit to Liberia from 18 to 27 March.

It goes on to welcome the initiative from Kimberley Process participants in West Africa to enhance their cooperation on Kimberley Process implementation and policy harmonization efforts in the context of the regional approach for the Mano River region, and acknowledges the region's plans for developing a regional strategy and road map as the outcome of a high-level workshop on regional cooperation in West Africa.

It notes that the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process restated the administrative decision on the temporary suspension of the Central African Republic, as approved through the written procedure of 23 May, and the reported willingness of the Central African Republic to address issues of non-compliance with Kimberley Process Certification Scheme minimum requirements and strengthen its internal control systems.

The decision of the plenary meeting regarding the continued participation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Kimberley Process acknowledges the positive step represented by the submissions presented by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in response to the decision of the plenary meeting, and invites the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to continue its efforts to fully reintegrate into the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme through the steps outlined in the Kimberley Process communiqué of 30 November 2012.

With regard to a very delicate subject, the draft resolution notes the discussions during 2013 on the subject of the Kimberley Process reforms and the proposed changes to the definition of "conflict diamonds"; among other proposals, also notes that consensus was not reached on whether or not to change the definition of "conflict diamonds", and further notes that the Chair, participants and observers were encouraged to continue dialogue on this issue.

The draft resolution acknowledges that the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process adopted a proposal for modifications to the Kimberley Process core document aimed at strengthening the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme within its current remit. As I indicated earlier, it also acknowledges the adoption by the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process of seven administrative decisions, on technical definitions; guidelines for the preparation, review and analysis of Kimberley Process statistical data; the chairmanship of Kimberley Process working bodies; Kimberley Process participants' applications for membership and participation in working bodies; protection guidelines for the use of the Kimberley Process logo; the dissolution of the Participation and Selection Committees and the formation of the Committee on Participation and Chairmanship; and technical certificates for scientific research.

In conclusion, let me say that the progress that has been noted — notably in the report and the final communiqué issued by the Kimberley Process plenary that took place in South Africa in November — represents a renewed commitment on the part of the participants in and observers to the Kimberley Process to ensuring that we continue to make it relevant, strengthen our internal controls and ensure that the Process can continue to respond effectively to the challenges it faces. We also take note that the situation has changed since the Kimberley Process was founded in 2003, particularly in some participating countries, as well as within the industry and civil society. We are committed to preserving a unique partnership that has enabled the Kimberley Process to survive and to confront some difficult challenges that have arisen to date.

I would like to thank those who have once again supported the draft resolution, and to point out that some participants have indicated they would like to be included. We hope that this will definitely be taken into consideration.

In conclusion, once again I would like to request the Assembly to take note of the report of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (see A/68/649), and, as in the past, to adopt the draft text as proposed.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Busuttil (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States, which act as a single participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, would like first to commend South Africa for its successful chairmanship of the Kimberley Process in a year that marked the tenth anniversary of the Scheme. We also welcome the results achieved insofar as they illustrate the important efforts deployed to continue strengthening the Kimberley Process and confront future challenges.

The European Union welcomes the fruitful work undertaken this year, notably the approval by the recent Kimberley Process plenary meeting of modifications to the annexes of the Kimberley Process core document. It also welcomes the agreement to continue examining and reviewing the Certification Scheme minimum requirements and the recommendations aimed at strengthening implementation. The European Union also welcomes the adoption of administrative decisions on the chairmanship and membership of the Kimberley Process working bodies. We firmly believe that the consistent use of those implementation tools will strengthen the Process' ability to tackle the illicit trade in conflict diamonds, and call on all participants to step up efforts to that end.

As Chair of the Kimberley Process Working Group on Monitoring, the European Union has actively contributed to strengthening implementation. It encourages participants to continue committing themselves to enhanced scrutiny through Kimberley Process peer review visits and submitting substantive annual reports. In particular, the European Union would like to express appreciation to South Africa, Liberia, the Russian Federation, Singapore and Viet Nam for hosting review visits in 2013, and to the countries that have extended invitations for review visits in 2014 and 2015.

Furthermore, the European Union notes with satisfaction that the Kimberley Process intends to further improve its transparency and promote the publication of annual and review visit reports. We also believe that the joint EU-India Kimberley Process Certification Scheme data-sharing platform, as presented at the Kimberley Process plenary, could be considered a good example

of enhanced information-sharing among participants as regards Kimberley Process implementation.

The credibility of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as an international process depends on effective implementation and enforcement by its participants. In that regard, the number of fake certificates detected and the illegal shipments blocked in 2013 testify that the Kimberley Process is effective in deterring conflict diamonds from entering the legitimate trade. The European Union looks forward to further progress in that area in 2014.

In the light of Security Council resolution 2101 (2013), the Kimberley Process engagement with Côte d'Ivoire has illustrated the positive role that the Scheme can play in situations where the production of and trade in diamonds might affect peace and security. As Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and facilitator of the United Nations Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, the European Union was part of the recent Kimberley Process review mission to Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, it has been helping the country to fulfil the Kimberley Process minimum requirements to the extent possible under the United Nations embargo.

The European Union welcomes the good cooperation of the Côte d'Ivoire authorities in meeting the Kimberley Process requirements and is determined to further support the efforts of Côte d'Ivoire in developing a transition strategy and road map aimed at the lifting of the United Nations embargo, thus ensuring that Ivorian diamonds will contribute to recovery and development. In that context, the European Union, through its Instrument for Stability, will provide technical assistance to promote the formalization of the artisanal mining sector and reinforcing the country's chain of custody.

With regard to other countries in West Africa, the EU welcomes the continued engagement of the Kimberley Process with Liberia under Security Council resolution 2079 (2012), as regional cooperation remains key to ensuring stability in the region. In that context, the European Union also highly welcomes the initiative of participants in the Mano River region to enhance their cooperation in the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and policy harmonization.

The most recent testimonial to the Process's ability to deal with situations of non-compliance has been the Central African Republic's temporary suspension from

the Scheme in May. As Chair of the Kimberley Process Working Group on Monitoring, the European Union is monitoring the situation and welcomes the efforts made by the Central African Republic authorities to develop a work plan for strengthening the country's internal control system. However, we feel that the security conditions in the country do not currently provide guarantees for preserving the integrity of the chain of custody of diamonds.

In looking forward, the European Union welcomes the decision taken at the Kimberley Process plenary meeting in Johannesburg to consider establishing an innovation committee with a view to encouraging further debate on reform issues and how the Scheme can respond to wider ethical issues. We strongly recognize the need to further strengthen and adapt the Kimberley Process to meet future challenges in the global diamond supply chain and to provide assurance for consumers that diamonds are not tainted by violence.

In 2013, the international community has demonstrated its determination to act collectively and constructively through the Kimberley Process, which is a valuable instrument to prevent diamonds from fuelling conflicts, and ultimately to contribute to economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. In that context, the European Union welcomes the framework on implementation of the Washington Declaration on integrating the development of artisanal and small-scale diamond mining in the Kimberley Process.

The EU expresses its gratitude to South Africa for its stewardship of the Process this year. We warmly welcome the People's Republic of China as incoming Chair at the start of the second decade of the Process, and congratulate Angola on its election as incoming Vice-Chair. We look forward to working closely with the new Chair and Vice-Chair to bring renewed impetus and strength to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation thanks the Republic of South Africa for its successful chairmanship of the Kimberley Process in 2013 and its effective consultations and coordination in preparing draft resolution A/68/L.29, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts", which my delegation supports. We also wish success

to the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Angola as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Kimberley Process in 2014.

Since 2000, the Russian Federation has been an active participant in the Kimberley Process. We commend its role in eliminating rough conflict diamonds from legitimate trade, and welcome the ongoing process to broaden the circle of participants in the Process. It is necessary to further encourage States to fully participate in the Process in the interest of rapidly creating a global, smoothly functioning and fully transparent mechanism for international trade in rough diamonds.

In our view, disproportionate sanctions are counterproductive and risk promoting uncontrolled, so-called grey trade areas. We support efforts to develop transparent and uniform rules and procedures for the Process that would prohibit double standards. In that respect, it is difficult to view the reform initiatives of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as timely when the issue lacks consensus among the participating States.

The Russian Federation opposes the politicization of the work of the Kimberley Process and the inclusion in its agenda of issues unrelated to its competencies. We note with regret the increasingly frequent attempts to transfer the issue of conflict diamonds outside of the Kimberley Process to alternative forums lacking a United Nations mandate. We emphasize that such irresponsible actions are unacceptable and risk weakening the existing streamlined, international control systems of the rough diamond trade. In that regard, we particularly note the unbreakable link between the Kimberley Process and the United Nations, established by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

A unique feature of the Kimberley Process is its tripartite structure. However, its work should be based first and foremost on international cooperation, with steadfast adherence to the underlying principles of international law and the national legislation of participating States. That also applies to representatives of civil society, whose actions should assist States in accomplishing the main objectives of the Kimberley Process. Only the coordinated efforts of States, the diamond industry and non-governmental organizations, based on standardized rules, will ensure that the tripartite structure of the Process becomes its strong point.

Mr. Prozor (Israel): For many decades, the reputation of the diamond industry was tarnished by conflict diamonds. Used as a tool for warfare and cash flow for warlords, those precious gems ignited wars, fueled slavery and enflamed entire countries. Lightweight, valuable and easy to smuggle, rough diamonds drove some of the worst armed conflicts in Africa — from Angola to Liberia and from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sierra Leone.

Ten years ago, an alliance of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the diamond industry united to address that crisis. They established a Certification Process to assure buyers that the diamonds they purchased were free from violence and human rights abuse. Since the Kimberley Process was established in 2003, conflict diamonds have fallen from 15 per cent of the global trade in rough diamonds to less than 1 per cent. This success is proof of what can be accomplished when a global commitment is matched by global action.

I may be biased, but I believe that Israel is the jewel of the Middle East and that the diamond industry is the jewel of the Israeli economy. Alongside Mumbai, Dubai and Shanghai, Israel is at the forefront of developments in the diamond industry. As the world's leading exporter of diamonds and the third-largest trading centre for diamonds, Israel is committed to demonstrating that a sustainable economy can be sustained by such values as integrity, honesty and trust. Israel regards the fight against conflict diamonds as an expression of *tikkun olam* — the obligation of every person to make the world a better place.

For that reason, Israel was one of the first countries to raise awareness of conflict diamonds. We were one of the first to play a part in establishing the Kimberley Process. And we were the first country to issue a certificate when the Kimberley Process went into effect in 2003. When Israel served as Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2010, it formed a partnership with the World Customs Organization and forged ties with countries that were not yet part of the Process.

Diamonds are assessed by four Cs: cut, color, clarity and carat. Today, I propose that the international community assess its success in addressing the illegal diamond trade through the adoption of a four different Cs, namely, conscience, conviction, credibility and confidence.

We must act on our collective conscience and raise awareness of the horrors and tragedies of the illegal diamond industry. We must show conviction to end the rampant human rights abuses that go hand in hand with conflict diamonds. We must demonstrate our credibility by further strengthening the Kimberley Process and ensuring that every single diamond is certified conflict-free. And we must ensure that buyers have confidence that they are buying diamonds that were responsibly mined, cut and polished.

Legally mined diamonds can contribute to Africa's growth and prosperity, but only if the industry is responsibly regulated. Our dedication to this cause must have the same clarity as the diamonds we seek to certify.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 32.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.29, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/68/L.29, the following countries have become sponsors: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.29?

Draft resolution A/68/L.29 was adopted (resolution 68/128).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 71 (continued)**Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence****Draft resolution (A/68/L.32)**

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a joint debate on agenda item 71, together with agenda item 70, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance” and its sub-items (a) to (d) at its 66th and 67th plenary meetings, on 12 December 2013.

I give the floor to the representative of Rwanda to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.32.

Ms. Uwizera (Rwanda): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled “Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence”, as contained in document A/68/L.32. We thank the countries that sponsored the draft resolution, namely, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The text was first adopted on 23 December 2003, after the tenth commemoration of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, as resolution 58/234. Under that resolution, the General Assembly decided to designate 7 April 2004 as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda.

Rwanda commends the Secretary-General for his report (A/68/497), which provides a detailed analysis of the current challenges to the delivery of relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, in addition to recommendations for appropriate ways to meet their remaining critical needs.

Nearly 20 years since the genocide took place, Rwandans, and particularly the survivors, are continuing to make tremendous strides in constructing the social fabric that was broken as a result of the genocide. However, given the extent to which the genocide has affected Rwandans, the post-trauma is a progressive healing process.

Despite the Government of Rwanda’s continued efforts to allocate part of its ordinary budget to the

pressing needs of the genocide survivors through the Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors, the Government of Rwanda still faces serious challenges associated with the enormous endeavour of rebuilding survivors’ shattered lives. The needs remain huge in sectors such as housing, health care, education and welfare support. The draft resolution is therefore intended to assist genocide survivors, especially widows and orphans. It is our hope that the General Assembly will continue to express its solidarity with the survivors of the 1994 genocide by adopting the draft resolution, as it has done in the past, and at the same time will recommit to the fight against genocide throughout the world and to the promise of “never again”.

In conclusion, the year 2014 marks 20 years since the genocide. Rwanda has chosen the theme “remember, unite, inspire”. We believe that this is an important occasion for all of us to come together to remember the lives that were lost, show our solidarity with the survivors and unite to ensure that it never happens again.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/68/L.32, entitled “Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in A/68/L.32, the following countries have become sponsors: Belgium, Canada, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Luxembourg and Spain.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.32?

Draft resolution A/68/L.32 was adopted (resolution 68/129).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 71?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I now call on those representatives wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to you, Sir, the Secretariat and all delegations for their widespread support for the consensus adoption of resolution 68/127 today.

Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the statement made by the representative of Israel. We fully understand the anger and fury of the representative of the Israeli regime that led to his hate speech today. It is evidently due to the fact that the resolution, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”, promotes moderation, tolerance and respect for human rights and condemns violence and violent extremism. Obviously, these are issues and concepts that the violent Israeli regime does not tolerate. He represents a regime that occupies the lands of other nations and places people in the occupied lands under harsh blockade. This is the most extremist of policies ever contemplated and implemented, coupled with its flouting of all norms and principles of international law. We are and, it is safe to say, the whole of humankind is against the policy of putting the people under occupation under siege and of denying them basic necessities.

The violent extremism that the resolution seeks to combat also includes the blatant resort to violence to put down the resistance of people under occupation. I therefore reject any accusation attributing extremist policies to my country.

As members of the Assembly know, Iran was and continues to be the victim of violent extremism, and many Iranians have been targets of sectarian violence. We have suffered for many years due to armed elements and groups in our region, including from the policies adopted by two extremist regimes in power during the 1980s and 1990s, in particular to the East and West of our territory, until the early years of this century. Fortunately, both of those regimes are now gone.

To alleviate the plight resulting from those extremist policies, the Islamic Republic of Iran has done everything in its power, including encouraging and supporting moderation in the region surrounding Iran. The current Iranian President focused during his electoral campaign on the need to expand moderation and prudence and turn them into a basis for policymaking in every areas, including in international relations.

Mr. Prozor (Israel): Abraham Lincoln said that you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. I would like to recall those words for the representative of Iran.

Israel has been and remains hopeful that the words in resolution 68/127, on which we joined the consensus, will be a torchlight that Iran can follow. Unfortunately, the statement made by the representative of Iran and other such statements made internationally over the past few weeks, and Iran’s decision not to recognize the State of Israel, tell us a different story. When making his remarks, the representative of Iran found the time to launch a range of baseless accusations against Israel, but conveniently failed to mention the serious violations of international law that his country has committed and is committing today.

I refuse to accept lectures on many issues from Iran, which can teach us only, unfortunately, the ABCs of terrorism. It stands behind terrorist activities from Argentina and Bulgaria to Cyprus — all proven and known. Iran is, unfortunately, the world’s chief trainer and primary sponsor of terror. It provides sophisticated weapons to Hamas, Hizbullah and other terrorist groups in the region and around the world. It is always an interesting experience when a representative of the greatest State sponsor of terror speaks out against terror, extremism and violence. The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to fund and train terrorists to murder innocent civilians in all parts of the globe.

Innocent people in all corners of the world are victims of Iran’s sponsored terrorism, which is something that we hope, based on resolution 68/127 — and this is what Israel is calling for — will focus the world’s attention on Iran. The Iranians should read their own resolution and follow it. Unfortunately, today in Iran, women are denied basic rights, free expression is repressed, minorities are persecuted and elections are a sham. All of this goes on and on and on, and I should not like to take up further time on this matter.

Regarding Israel, we are committed to the peace process. Discussions are under way between us and the Palestinians on that issue. We hope to resolve it very soon. It has nothing to do with today’s resolution.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.