



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

72nd plenary meeting
Monday, 23 December 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I shall now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/68/L.34, circulated under sub-item (b) of agenda item 67, entitled “Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”. Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 67 to the Third Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 67 directly in the plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 67 (continued)

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Draft resolution (A/68/L.34)

The President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position before taking a

decision on draft resolution A/68/L.34, I should like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Watanabe Patriota (Brazil): I would like to thank all Member States, particularly the delegation of South Africa, as well as you, Mr. President, for the leadership shown in this process.

Brazil welcomes the impending decision to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.34. My delegation engaged fully and constructively in the consultation process and made every effort to ensure that there were no more delays in proclaiming the International Decade for People of African Descent. Our commitment to the issue has been longstanding and consistent at every level — domestic, regional and international — because we represent the largest group of people of African descent outside Africa, and we still face manifestations of racism and race-based discrimination inherited from a past of colonialism and slavery. The Brazilian Government is a strong advocate of the fight against racism and race-based discrimination. For Brazil, the International Decade provides an opportunity to educate the public in general and raise society’s awareness about combating prejudice, intolerance and racism. My delegation would like to congratulate and thank everyone here today.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.34, entitled “Proclamation of the International Decade for People

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of African Descent". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/68/L.34 was adopted (resolution 68/237).

The President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 68/237, may I again remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The United States remains fully and firmly committed to upholding the human rights of all people and to combating racism and racial discrimination. We are pleased to join the consensus on resolution 68/237, and look forward to helping to formulate what we hope will be an appropriate and successful programme of action for the International Decade for People of African Descent.

In the United States, our history has shown that by reducing the discrimination faced by minority women, men and children, including those of African descent — whether that discrimination was in education, access to credit, entrepreneurship or employment opportunities — the country has benefited from their talents and contributions. We recognize, commemorate and celebrate those contributions, including through an annual African-American history month. We support global efforts to promote knowledge of, and respect for, the cultural heritage and contributions to society of people of African descent.

We welcome the additional time allotted for work on the programme of action. We also appreciate that its final version will benefit from additional consultations with Member States and other stakeholders on the draft prepared by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. We have previously expressed concerns about the Working Group's current draft, to the extent that it calls for multiple new instruments and mechanisms of questionable value. As Member States continue to work on the programme of action through consultations and the intergovernmental process, we will pay attention to potential associated costs and sources of funding in the context of the pressures that Member States are experiencing in meeting their existing obligations. We must also make every effort to ensure, as far as possible, that funds are shifted

away from lower-priority activities in order to cover those associated with the programme of action within existing resources. We look forward to the negotiations over the programme of action and will participate with an eye to ensuring that any commitments are effective, meaningful and cost-efficient.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union, who wishes to make a statement following the adoption of resolution 68/237.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) in order to explain our position on resolution 68/237, which was submitted by you, Mr. President.

At the outset, I would like to emphasize our appreciation of the efforts by the facilitator, Ambassador Mamabolo of South Africa, for his successful conduct of the consultations in a limited period of time, producing a short procedural resolution on the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. We welcome the proposed two-step approach to establishing the Decade and the possibility of having a proper intergovernmental discussion of the programme of action that will underpin it. Postponing the start of the Decade to 2015 is not time lost but time won. The EU's interest lies in making the most of the Decade, and we are willing to work to make it a successful and meaningful process. We hope it will contribute to adding value and delivering concrete improvements to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance everywhere and for all.

While today we applaud the fact that the Decade has been launched on a consensus basis, we look forward to working with all Member States next year on developing a consensual, realistic and achievable programme of action. We therefore call for the launch of the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in Geneva as soon as possible, in order to give us the necessary time to reach a consensus outcome.

I would like to conclude by assuring you, Mr. President, of the full support of the European Union in this process. The fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance remains a top priority on our human-rights agenda. We are therefore strongly committed to a Decade that contributes to the advancement of that cause.

The President: I should like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Kingsley Mamabolo, Permanent Representative of South Africa and facilitator of the consultations on resolution 68/237, who so ably concluded the discussions and complex negotiations involved. I am sure the members of the Assembly join me in extending to him our sincere appreciation, as well as our confidence in the continuing constructive deliberations on formulating a programme for implementing the International Decade for People of African Descent, to be adopted by 30 June 2014.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 67.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: Members will recall that, at its 53rd plenary meeting, on 18 November 2013, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 129. In order for the Assembly to consider agenda item 129, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 129 and proceed immediately to that consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 129 (continued)

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/68/623)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/68/668)

Draft decision (A/68/L.35)

The President: In this connection, the Assembly has before it document A/68/623, in which the Secretary-General transmits letters dated 30 October and 19 November 2013 from Judge Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; document A/68/668, in which the President of the Security Council draws the attention of the President of the General Assembly to the text of Council resolution

2130 (2013), of 18 December 2013; and a draft decision, issued as document A/68/L.35.

Members will recall that, at its 53rd plenary meeting, on 18 November 2013, the Assembly elected Mr. Koffi Afande of Togo as a member of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for a term of office beginning on 18 November and ending on 31 December 2013, or upon the completion of the cases to which the judge is assigned, if sooner.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/68/L.35. The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/68/L.35. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision A/68/L.35 was adopted (decision 68/416).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 129.

In view of the fact that the Fifth Committee has not yet completed its work, it is my intention to suspend the meeting now. The plenary will resume following the adjournment of the work of the Fifth Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 3.20 p.m. on 23 December and resumed at 3 p.m. on 27 December 2013.

Agenda item 19 (continued)

Sustainable development

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Second Committee (A/68/438/Add.2)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/679)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 9 of its report. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/68/679.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Second Committee adopted it. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/238).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea, who wishes to speak in explanation of position following the adoption of resolution 68/238.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Pacific small island developing States and on my own delegation's behalf, I wish to present our position on the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/68/438/Add.2, submitted under sub-item (b) of agenda item 19, entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", as well as on the Fifth Committee decision on the programme budget implications of the resolution. We joined the consensus for the following rationale.

As we embark upon the road to Samoa in September 2014 for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and beyond, commencing with the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee on 24 February 2014, which coincides with the launch of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States, we recognize that, as small island developing States, we have made measured progress in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, much more remains to be done.

We are cognizant of the opportunities, challenges and vulnerabilities that we continue to face, especially the evolving global economic and financial situation, the adverse impacts of climate change and our respective national constraints in the post-2015 development agenda. However, we are equally determined to take ownership and leadership of our future sustainable development pathway. That was aptly demonstrated once again by our collective regional and interregional efforts in Jamaica, Fiji, Seychelles and Barbados in July and August 2013, respectively, where we identified, agreed on and articulated our key sustainable development priorities now and for the years ahead. We recognize that, in certain areas, we will continue to require durable and genuine partnership and cooperation from our development partners in the global North and South

and trilaterally in order to complement and support our national development efforts. That is why we are continuing to reach out to our partners as important stakeholders.

It is in that context that we thank the three small island developing States regions of the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and South China Seas, the Caribbean Community and the Pacific for their mutual understanding, trust, cooperation and partnership and for their ownership and leadership and as architects of small island developing States' priorities in our sustainable development agenda, now and in future.

Our commendation is also extended to the Group of 77 and China for the support and encouragement under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in our pursuit of a transformative sustainable development agenda that will bring about pragmatic, durable and resilient solutions to small island developing States communities and people's lives and livelihoods.

We also acknowledge and thank our partners, including the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, for their openness, flexibility and understanding of our sustainable development challenges and needs. We welcome our partners' willingness, support and commitment to the programme budget implications for the resolution on small island developing States modalities.

We remain committed and therefore pledge to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the outcome of the Samoa Conference builds on the solid foundation laid by the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation and galvanize support for small island developing States in the remaining lifespan of the MDGs and for the post-2015 development agenda.

In conclusion, we would also applaud and thank the Rapporteur of the Second Committee, the representative of New Zealand, the lead negotiators and facilitators and the Fifth Committee for the satisfactory level of cooperation and partnership in ensuring the adoption of the resolution by consensus.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 19.

Agenda item 20 (continued)**Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)****Report of the Second Committee (A/68/439)****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/678)**

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 12 of its report. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/68/678.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Second Committee adopted it. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/239).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 69 (continued)**Promotion and protection of human rights****(a) Implementation of human rights instruments****Report of the Third Committee (A/68/456/Add.1)****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/675)**

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution I, recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 20 of its report. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution I is contained in document A/68/675.

We will now take action on draft resolution I, entitled "Human Rights Committee". The Third Committee adopted it. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 68/240).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 69?

It was so decided.

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms**Report of the Third Committee (A/68/456/Add.2)****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/677)**

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution XVII, recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 146 of its report. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution XVII is contained in document A/68/677.

We will now take a decision on draft resolution XVII, entitled "United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine,

United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Ethiopia

Draft resolution XVII was adopted by 132 votes to 1 against, with 1 abstention (resolution 68/241).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Belarus, Greece, Lebanon, Lesotho, Morocco, the Russian Federation, the Sudan and Tunisia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 69?

It was so decided.

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Report of the Third Committee (A/68/456/Add.3)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/676)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution II, recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 27 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution II is contained in document A/68/676.

We will now take a decision on draft resolution II, entitled "Situation of human rights in Myanmar." The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 68/242).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69 and of agenda item 69 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 94

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Report of the First Committee (A/68/406)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/674)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution recommended by the First Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/68/674.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The First Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/243).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 132 to 134, 136 to 139, 141, 143 to 146, 148, 158 and 159 (a).

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Ken Siah of Singapore, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Fifth Committee before the Assembly.

Mr. Siah (Singapore), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee. The Fifth Committee met from 3 October to 27 December 2013, and held 26 plenary meetings and numerous informal consultations.

The Committee's reports on the following agenda items were considered by the General Assembly at its 32nd, 52nd and 59th plenary meetings: agenda item 138, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations"; specifically on Article 19; agenda item 116, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments"; agenda item 131, entitled "Financial

reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors”; agenda item 135, entitled “Programme planning”; and agenda items 142 and 132, entitled, respectively, “Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services” and “Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations”. I shall now introduce additional reports of the Fifth Committee on the following items.

On agenda item 137, entitled “Pattern of conferences”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/673, the adoption of a draft decision adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 138, entitled “Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/68/504/Add.1, the adoption of a draft decision adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 139, entitled “Human resources management”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/68/690, the adoption of a draft resolution adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 141, entitled “United Nations common system”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/68/684, the adoption of a draft resolution adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 143, entitled “Administration of justice at the United Nations”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/68/670, the adoption of a draft resolution adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda items 144, entitled “Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994”; item 145, entitled “Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for

Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991”; and item 146, entitled “Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of the reports contained in documents A/68/681, A/68/682 and A/68/683, respectively, the adoption of the related draft resolutions adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Committee adopted all the draft resolutions on the financing of peacekeeping operations without a vote. The reports of the Fifth Committee are introduced under the following agenda items: item 148, entitled “Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei”, as contained in document A/68/672; item 158, entitled “Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali”, as contained in document A/68/680; and sub-item (a), entitled “United Nations Disengagement Observer Force”, of agenda item 159, entitled “Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East”, as contained in document A/68/671.

On agenda item 133, entitled “Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its report contained in document A/68/688, the adoption of two draft resolutions adopted by the Committee without a vote.

On agenda item 134, entitled “Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”, as reflected in paragraph 34 of document A/68/689, the Committee considered five draft resolutions. The Committee adopted draft resolution I, on questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, without a vote. With regard to draft resolution II, on special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, a recorded vote was requested on section VI. The Committee voted to retain section VI of draft resolution II, and the draft resolution as a whole was adopted without a vote. The Committee also adopted without a vote draft resolution III, on financing, draft resolution IV, on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, and draft resolution V, on the working capital fund of the proposed programme budget biennium 2014-2015.

The Committee also recommends the adoption of six draft statements on programme budget implications.

The relevant reports of the Committee have been issued in documents A/68/674 to A/68/679.

On agenda item 132, entitled “Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations”, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 5 of its report contained in document A/68/691, the adoption of a draft decision on questions deferred for future consideration, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

I thank delegations for their cooperation and assure them that changes made during the Fifth Committee’s 26th plenary meeting will be reflected in the draft resolutions and reports that will be issued shortly.

The President: Before proceeding further, I would like to emphasize to representatives that, as the Fifth Committee has just finished its work, the reports are available in English only. I have been informed that they will be issued in all languages as soon as possible. I thank members for their understanding.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee.”

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance. That means that, where recorded votes were taken, we will do the same. I should also hope that we will proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Committee.

Agenda item 133

Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/688)

The President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report. We will now take action on draft resolutions I and II, one by one.

We first turn to draft resolution I, entitled “Managing after-service health insurance liabilities”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.6. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 68/244).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled “Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.18. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 68/245).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 133.

Agenda item 134

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/689)

The President: The Assembly has before it five draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 43 of its report.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegations of Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua with regard to section VI of draft resolution II, entitled “Special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”.

We wish to make clear before the General Assembly our rejection, given the lack of a legislative mandate, of the inclusion of narratives, functions, expected outcomes, indicators and metrics related to the so-called responsibility to protect in the logical framework of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. We reaffirm that such inclusion undermines successive General Assembly resolutions on programme planning and programme budgets.

We Member States have not negotiated any agreement on the definition of that concept, its scope of applicability or other topics related thereto. Consequently, it is clear that there is no legal basis for the Special Adviser to undertake the development and fine-tuning of a concept that has not been agreed upon by Member States.

In reiterating our unconditional support for the activities of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and our strict adherence to international law, we want to request a vote on section VI of draft resolution II, owing to the reasons I have just outlined.

The President: We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I to V, one by one.

Draft resolution I is entitled “Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.19. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 68/246).

The President: We now turn to draft resolution II, entitled “Special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”,

the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.20.

A separate recorded vote has been requested on section VI of draft resolution II. Member States are reminded that, in accordance with rule 83 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, budgetary questions require a majority of two thirds of those present and voting.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Abstaining:

Belarus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka

Section VI of draft resolution II was retained by 136 votes to 7, with 8 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Belarus and the Russian Federation informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution II as a whole. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II, as a whole, was adopted (resolution 68/247).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled “Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.21. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 68/248).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled “Unforeseen extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2014-2015”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.22. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 68/249).

The President: Draft resolution V is entitled “Working Capital Fund for the biennium 2014-2015”, the text of which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.23. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 68/250).

The President: I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position following the adoption of the resolutions.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation joined the consensus with regard to resolution 68/246, entitled “Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015”, after having participated in the process that led to agreement on the draft resolution as a part of the

package presented by the Chair of the Fifth Committee on 23 December.

Although it covers an important group of elements related to methodology and budgetary procedures, the text lacks other factors that necessarily should provide guidelines to the Secretary-General on the topic and establish a framework for the implementation of the budget for the next biennium. That legislative vacuum is the result of the difficult scenario that characterized the interaction among delegations when it came to agreeing upon the aforementioned text. Therefore, we agree that the resolution that we have just adopted is exceptional and, as a result, should not be considered a precedent for future negotiations.

Scenarios such as that which characterized the work related to the budget undermine multilateralism, friendly relations among countries and delegations and the spirit of cooperation that should prevail in the Organization and that the international community so yearns for.

My delegation regrets the fact that the General Assembly did not agree to maintain a group in the Publications Section. In that regard, we reiterate the fact that the introduction of new technologies should not necessarily lead to the involuntary separation of staff nor to staff reduction. We hope that the Secretary-General will take the actions necessary to place the affected staff in other areas and facilitate the necessary training to carry out their new functions.

My delegation did not insist on modifying subprogramme 2, entitled “Disasters and conflicts”, and the related narrative of programme 14, “Environment”, for facilitating consensus on the work of the Committee at such a late date. However, we underscore that we had and have the right to do so, since the text does not reflect the intergovernmental agreements that were reached at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and on the 2012-2013 programme budget, nor does it have a legal basis in the context of the Conference. My delegation expresses its reservations with regard to the content of the aforementioned subprogramme, and its intention to reconsider this topic when the next strategic framework is considered.

Furthermore, we hope that during the implementation of the budget for section 24, on human rights, the Secretary-General will establish a separate

section to support the Universal Periodic Review, in accordance with resolution 66/246.

Mr. Bayat Mokhtari (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation has asked for the floor to explain its vote on section VI of resolution 68/247.

Iran has always supported the activities of the United Nations in all areas related to its scope of work, as long as they abide by the rules and regulations of the Organization and remain within the parameters of international law and the realm of the United Nations.

Although Iran supports the functions of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, in the view of my delegation, the issue of the responsibility to protect, including its definition, is still under consideration by the General Assembly. It is therefore not acceptable to my delegation that the limited financial resources of the Organization be allocated to funding posts for which there is no mandated definition.

It was based on that reason that my delegation voted against section VI of the resolution.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 136

Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-eighth session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer the consideration of this item to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer its consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-ninth session?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 137

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/673)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. For the time being, the text of the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.11.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/251).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 138 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/504/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. For the time being, the text of the draft decision is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.10.

We will now take action on the draft decision. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 68/548).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in explanation of position following the adoption of the decision.

Mr. Goren (Israel): Israel regrets and objects to the use of the misleading terminology “State of Palestine” in decision 68/548, adopted under agenda item 138, entitled “Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations”. It is counterproductive to use that term when no such State exists and when such a State can be established only through direct negotiations, as has been affirmed repeatedly by the international community and agreed between the parties.

There is only one route to Palestinian statehood. That route does not run through this Hall in New York, but only through direct negotiations between Jerusalem and Ramallah. In that regard, Israel reiterates the position expressed at the General Assembly by Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations on 29 November 2012 (see A/67/PV.44), and on 23 January 2013 in the Security Council (see S/PV.6906), and is compelled to disassociate itself from this decision. I ask that this disassociation be noted in the official records of this meeting.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda 139

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/690)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. For the time being, the text of the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.25.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/252).

The President: I shall now give the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Kalindra (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the European Union.

The States members of the European Union have long been staunch supporters of human resources management reform. The goal of making the work of the United Nations more effective and efficient by implementing a modern human resources system and by fostering an organizational culture that enables staff at all levels to contribute to their greatest potential is one we fully subscribe to. This year's resolution 68/252 on human resources management includes several welcome elements. In particular, we are pleased to see the shared recognition of the importance of improving performance management, and we request that the Secretary-General present proposals in that regard next year.

As we have recalled several times in the last year, we have been strong proponents of the principle of managed mobility, which we need in order to meet the needs of the Organization and its staff, including their families, and to respond to the concerns of Member States. During the formal meetings of the Committee on 25 November, we made it clear that we were entering this session with an aspiration to agree to a workable new scheme. It is therefore disappointing that for various reasons the Fifth Committee was collectively unable to go beyond the decision to defer the Secretary-General's refined proposal on mobility to the first resumed session. However, our view is that the decision does not amount to a rejection of the Secretary-General's proposal. We will be working hard with the other States members of the Committee to ensure that the first resumed session yields a positive outcome on this important matter.

Since I have the floor, I would like to conclude my statement with a few additional remarks, expressing our deep appreciation for the outstanding way in which the Chair of the Fifth Committee, Ambassador Janne Taalas of Finland, has carried out his duties in the face of some of the most difficult negotiations in recent memory. His resilience and professionalism were key in getting us together around a final overall deal that, while not perfect for anyone, contains welcome elements. We would also like to thank the principals from the Group of 77 and China, and from Russia, who participated in the crucial final stages of the negotiations.

We dedicate a special tribute to the efforts of the Chair of the Group of 77, Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, during the Fifth Committee negotiations and throughout the year. He was always a tough negotiator and defended the interests of his group with admirable passion and effectiveness, but at the end of the day, on our side we always felt that a sensible and mutually acceptable compromise could and would be found. We fully concur with him that when people sit together and talk in a timely manner, even the most intractable problems can be worked out. That spirit will continue to guide us in dealing with all our partners in this Hall on Fifth Committee matters and any other United Nations-related business.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to every delegation for having reached an agreement on the 2014-2015 biennium budget and the 2012-2013 performance report, as well as other issues on the Fifth Committee

agenda. It is regrettable, however, that despite all the hard work and extended discussion, we have not been able to reach an agreement on the managed-mobility proposal.

The most valuable asset of this Organization is its human resources. A managed-mobility policy is essential to their optimal use. While it was proposed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, it will far transcend his term. It would be a shame if, due to short-sightedness or lack of wisdom, we could not bring an urgently required reform to the Organization. I hope that we, as responsible members of this body, will take a decision on mobility at the next resumed session in order to provide the Secretariat with a clear direction of where we are headed.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): On the occasion of the adoption of the human resources management resolution (68/252), my delegation notes how unfortunate it was that we could not arrive at an agreement on the mobility proposal. We look forward to and intend to participate actively in the discussions in the first resumed session on this important proposal, so that we may quickly resolve any outstanding issues and come together to adopt a consensus resolution at that session.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 141

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/684)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.17. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/253).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 143

Administration of justice at the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/670)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.7. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/254).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 144

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/681)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.14. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/255).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 144.

Agenda item 145**Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/682)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.15.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation for an explanation of vote.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for presenting draft resolution A/C.5/68/L.15. Despite the fact that the Russian Federation decided not to oppose its adoption, we feel compelled to express our regret over the non-inclusion of our proposal for strengthening the Tribunals' budgetary discipline and introducing independent evaluations of the effectiveness of the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. This is added to the fact that more questions are raised for us every year about the effectiveness of the Tribunals' work, let alone their transparency and accountability. Should the Tribunals not demonstrate substantive progress in the future with the questions of the ultimate conclusion of their work and the transfer of their remaining functions to the International Residual Mechanism, we will press for seriously decisive measures to be taken, including a comprehensive independent investigation of their work.

The President: We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/256).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 146**Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/683)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.16. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/257).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 146.

Agenda item 148**Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/672)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.9. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/258).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 148.

Agenda item 158**Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/680)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.13. The Assembly will now take a decision

on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/259).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 158.

Agenda item 159

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/671)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report. The text of the draft resolution, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.8. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled “Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force”. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/260).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 159.

Agenda item 132 (continued)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/691)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report. The text of the draft decision, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/68/L.26. The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision, entitled “Questions deferred for future consideration”. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 68/549).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to thank Mr. Janne Taalas, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations and Chair of the Fifth Committee, the Secretary of the Fifth Committee and the members of the bureau, as well as representatives, for a job well done.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all of the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

I shall now call on those delegations that have requested an opportunity to make statements.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): I speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I believe that the spirit of Nelson Mandela hovers over the United Nations, guiding us and pointing the way to higher ground. His spirit urges us to extract the essence of that which rests within our better natures to carry out the formidable tasks and responsibilities with which the United Nations and its community of diplomats are charged. We all know the many lessons he gave on the subject of opposing sides coming together to work in partnership for the good of all, knowing that in the end he and the other side, as Madiba said, must be closer and thus emerge stronger. May the spirit of the great man lead us to such unity, for the United Nations and the world we represent will need it if we are to overcome the great challenges lying before us in the twenty-first century.

We have negotiated, in the long hours of the days and nights approaching Christmas, on Christmas Day itself, and during these past two concluding days, a 12-point package that has led us to the adoption of the biennium budget this afternoon. Having so arduously agreed on that delicately balanced package, we have found it necessary to defend its integrity with vigilance. From the Group of 77's position, such vigilance was required because it has been our solemn duty, throughout this process, to protect the delivery of essential United Nations services to the people of the developing world. We all know that such services are vital to our efforts to eradicate poverty and uplift conditions in the developing world.

One of the elements of the 12-point package was the decision to defer the Secretary-General's proposal on mobility to the first resumed session in March 2014. That deferment has been a bitter disappointment to many parties, including many in the Group of 77 and China, for the central aim of the mobility proposal is

to increase equity and effectiveness with respect to the human resources of the United Nations. It is clear to many that mobility will improve the lot of those public servants who dedicate themselves to the provision of United Nations services on the ground in the developing world. As such, it behoves us all to remain seized of the mobility proposal and to talk through any remaining differences, so that we might sit down in March ready to deliver a positive outcome.

Mr. President, I take this moment to thank you for the firm hand and wise counsel that you have exerted during the budget negotiations. We have been most fortunate to have had a man of your stature at the helm, a man with such a deep understanding of the affairs of the General Assembly, a man with so many years of United Nations leadership under his belt. The Group's thanks also go to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their ever-responsive action on the necessary number crunching and their ever-available expert analysis and good advice.

I would like to present the Group of 77 and China's sincere appreciation to the Chair of the Fifth Committee, Ambassador Taalas. In the wee small hours of the morning, Ambassador Taalas was always there, giving everything he had to brokering the 12-point package that brought home the biennium's budget. And to Ambassadors Torsella, Yamazaki and Vrailas, representing the partners, along with their tireless expert negotiating team, I doff my fedora and give thanks for their understanding and for the commitment we all shared towards achieving a settlement that would, under the circumstances, be the best possible for the United Nations. I have a special word of appreciation for Ambassador Torsella, who is moving on from the United Nations to new duties. He has left his mark, and we wish him Godspeed for what lies ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank Ambassadors Patriota, Tommo Monthe, Pacunega Manano and Goicochea, along with Juliana Ruas and the Group of 77 and China experts negotiating team, for their dedication to the job of representing our Group through the long negotiations. Lastly, a special word of thanks to Sai Navoti of the Mission of Fiji, who was sitting behind me, who has so steadfastly led the Group of 77 and China in the Fifth Committee during 2013. He returns to his island paradise in Fiji next week. To one and all, as we say in Fiji, *Vinaka vaka levu* — thank you very much.

We have today approved the \$5.4 billion budget for the United Nations for the 2014-2015 biennium.

It represents the best that we as Member States can muster at this time of continuing austerity in the world economy. It has been crafted with the desire we all share to fortify the Organization so that it may fulfil its fundamental duty to humanity. In joining the consensus on the biennium, the Group of 77 and China does so with deep concern that budgetary austerity may negatively affect the development pillar of the work of the United Nations. We ask the Secretary-General to make every effort to keep that from occurring.

The commencement of the biennium is now days away. Let us enter it as members of a global community standing side by side as we design a global development agenda for the universal betterment of the planet, an agenda that has as its centre a renewed commitment to the abolition of poverty from the world and a common dedication to uplifting the freedom of others.

Mr. Torsella (United States of America): The United States is indeed pleased that after so many long days and nights of difficult discussions, weeks of intense and important debates, and months of hard work by so many people, we have a United Nations budget for the 2014-2015 biennium that follows the same responsible trend established in the last biennium — a reduction in the starting level of the new biennium from the final spending level of the last and a dramatically different trend line of essentially level spending since 2010-2011 in comparison with the biennium-to-biennium increases of 15 per cent in the previous decade.

We welcome the major first step toward streamlining the Organization represented by the 2 per cent reduction in the staffing table for the first time in many years. As we have said many times, staffing costs represent the primary driver of the vast expansion in the United Nations regular budget in previous bienniums, and the agreement we have reached is a recognition that the first step in addressing spiralling costs is to eliminate unnecessary, duplicative or outdated posts.

Likewise, we applaud the action taken today to freeze United Nations pay for one year and United Nations allowances for two. At a time when the budgets and crucial services of many common system organizations have been squeezed, those measures will hold compensation costs in place until we can act in the next session on the recommendations to bend the five-year pay curve down to an appropriate level and make the total compensation package more sustainable in the session thereafter.

We are also very pleased that there will be no new assessment on taxpayers for the final portion of the 2012-2013 recosting bill. And while we are disappointed that the budget did not end the practice of recosting entirely, we are encouraged to have at last commissioned an independent study on recosting reform that will enable us, if we have the political will, to make long-needed changes to that antiquated process next fall. Likewise, we are optimistic that our agreement on recosting today, combined with the post adjustment and allowance freeze we approved, will remove much of the variability of past bienniums. We further hope and expect that the Secretariat will continue its management reform efforts and continue to utilize financial risk management tools to find further efficiencies that will minimize the impact of any additional financial requests and recosting needs not already covered in the budget.

The aforementioned milestone measures mark a new commitment to real fiscal discipline at the United Nations at a tough time for hardworking families around the world. They benefit not only taxpayers, but the people around the world who depend on the United Nations. All of us want and deserve a United Nations that is sustainable, effective and credible, and today's budget represents a recognition by Member States that business as usual is not sustainable.

There are other significant achievements. We have advanced the important work of the United Nations Missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and elsewhere. We have strengthened the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Environment Programme in follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the support given by the Department of Political Affairs to the Central African Republic, to name a few areas.

Of course, there is more the General Assembly could have done this session. We are especially disappointed that the pressure of time prevented Member States from approving a mobility proposal — as we were urged to do by the Secretary-General — and the proposal to establish the United Nations Partnerships Facility, which would provide coherence and guidance to the many private and non-governmental entities working with the United Nations to enable them to provide for the neediest people around the world.

Key concerns about the implementation details of mobility had been addressed over the past few weeks

through intensive dialogue and hard work with other Member States and the Secretariat. We were prepared to move forward, and we are deeply disappointed that the Fifth Committee was not able to complete its work on those items. The United States reiterates today our support for a managed-mobility programme, our commitment to working constructively with all colleagues to achieve it in just a few weeks' time in the first resumed session as a matter of priority, and our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his passion and determination on the issue.

It is crucial both for Member States and for the Secretariat to continue to manage with vigilance during the upcoming biennium to protect the gains that we have made over the past few years. We thank the Secretariat for its efforts over the course of 2012-2013 to manage prudently and responsibly, not on behalf of any Member State, but because that is its obligation to this Organization. Our shared goal should be to ensure that the United Nations can maximize the results that it delivers with the amount of resources that Member States are collectively able to provide.

In closing, we wish to thank the Secretary-General again for his leadership in proposing revised budget levels that seek to do more with less by capitalizing on ways to do business better and smarter and that respond to the fiscal climate affecting many Member States. We also thank his senior managers for their tireless work this session and throughout the year. In particular, we commend Chef de Cabinet Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General Yukio Takasu and Assistant Secretary-General and Controller María Eugenia Casar Perez for their commitment to reform.

As we have heard, we would have not been able to complete our work without the leadership of Ambassador Janne Taalas. His dedication, relentless drive and inexhaustible energy helped the Committee to navigate the many difficult issues that threatened to derail the budget and other issues. We were also kept on track by our dedicated bureau members and Ms. Sharon Van Buerle and her team. And we are grateful, Mr. President, to have been in your wise and firm hands at various points in the process.

Finally, I want to acknowledge both our colleagues in the Like-Minded Group and our negotiating counterparts, especially the always tough but always gracious, calm and professional Ambassador Peter Thomson, the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China. I must say that this is the first time in my life that I have

wished I did have a fedora because if I had one I would tip it back to Ambassador Thomson.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. President, for your close personal engagement with the Fifth Committee leadership, negotiating teams and representatives to expedite the decision-making process. We particularly thank you, Sir, for your intervention at the last moment to bridge the gaps between the Group of 77 and China and the Partners. Your wise counsel helped the two sides to bring the current phase of negotiations to a close.

We fully associated ourselves with the statement made by Ambassador Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In the past two weeks, negotiations were intense and difficult, and yet negotiators from both sides moved to common ground on many issues, leading to adoption of all the draft resolutions by consensus. Negotiating teams continued to work hard, even during Christmas. They spent several nights here. That fact alone must be recognized by all with deepest appreciation.

I want to pay special tribute to Ambassador Peter Thomson and his dedicated negotiating teams from the Group of 77 and China, which engaged with their equally able interlocutors from among the Partners. Ambassador Thomson has set new standards of leadership, outreach and camaraderie. We thank him for the constructive role he has played throughout the year.

I would like to make three brief points. First, there has been inordinate delay in reaching decisions in the Fifth Committee this year. That is regrettable because the complexity of the issues this year was by no means more challenging than in previous years. We are concluding our work today, two days after Christmas, which sets a new precedent, but not a good one. We should resolve not to let that happen next year.

Secondly, despite the Committee's affirmations to conduct its work in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, the budget negotiations were held in small group configurations and behind closed doors. That must be rectified.

Thirdly, from delays this year we have learned a lesson once again that the working methods of the Committee should be reformed and reviewed in earnest. Conduct of negotiations should be made more efficient,

effective and time-bound. We must take an early start to meet the deadlines.

We strongly believe that the two issues before the Committee — staff mobility and the Partnerships Facility — were ripe for decision. It is pity that the issues have been postponed until March 2014, to the Fifth Committee's first resumed session.

We are glad that the two issues have been postponed for a very short time and have not been shelved. The momentum generated with respect to the two issues must be maintained between now and March. Staff mobility, in particular, could have been addressed definitively because of the broad convergence of a critical mass of constituencies on the issue. The Secretary-General himself has widely engaged with the membership to highlight the merits of making the transition to a system of phased managed mobility to make the United Nations a truly modern and efficient Organization. Member States are convinced of the merits of the case. We therefore urge all Member States to prepare themselves for taking a decision in March next year.

Separately, the Partnerships Facility is also mature for a decision. In fact, in practice, the United Nations has established partnerships with a vast array of organizations. It is time to formalize those partnerships to optimally use their full potential. Once formalized, the partnerships could reinforce the United Nations core agenda and functionalities in the areas of peace, development and human rights.

Although there has been frequent interaction on the subject, some Member States have raised questions, mainly in relation to the oversight of the extrabudgetary resources. That and other issues can be discussed further between now and March, when we will take a final decision.

We hope that when we begin our discussions during the resumed session in March 2014, we will engage constructively in an open, transparent and inclusive manner and seek to resolve particular and legitimate concerns of some Member States through an inclusive negotiating process.

Finally, we also wish Ambassador Torsella well and great success as he moves on. He leaves his mark on the Committee and we appreciate his rich contribution to its work.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): Ambassador Thomson of Fiji has spoken eloquently on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Samoa happily defers to his wisdom and outstanding leadership of the Group throughout 2013.

Celebrations of occasions like today's are few and far between, especially for a small island developing State (SIDS) like Samoa. When they do come around, we must necessarily take the floor to add our voice of appreciation for the understanding and sympathy shown by all Member States when addressing resolution 68/238, on modalities for the SIDS Conference in 2014, as evidenced by its successful and consensual adoption today. In the same spirit, Samoa aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea, who spoke on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States.

Since the decision was taken 18 months ago in Rio de Janeiro to hold a third conference on SIDS, we have been reminding the General Assembly and the Member States of one simple truth, a truth that can easily or conveniently get lost in the heat of multilateral negotiations. That simple truth is that the 2014 conference is a global event. Yes, it will be a United Nations international conference on SIDS, not a SIDS conference only for SIDS.

Thankfully, today's consensus resolution is a powerful and tangible expression of that truth. Everyone's support and understanding was critical. The SIDS, the Group of 77 and China and our partners could not have achieved that result on their own. Looking forward, it is a fitting method for underpinning our joint path from here on to Samoa in September 2014. It is also an appropriate way to usher in 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States and to underscore the theme of the Samoa Conference, namely, the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.

The SIDS are an integral part of our global family, and my delegation remains confident that as long as our member States focus on our positive attributes, not the negatives; on our strengths, not our weaknesses; on the way forward, not the past; and on what binds us, not the artificial barriers that divide us, we can utilize the 2014 Samoa Conference in a genuine way to effectively address the special case and needs of small island developing States.

Mr. Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): I would first like to highlight the exceptional work

done by the experts in the Fifth Committee with a view to achieving an agreement on the budget for 2012-2013 and for 2014-2015. In particular, I should express Brazil's sincere appreciation for the competent leadership of the Chair of the Group of 77, Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, and his team. Due recognition should also be given to the tireless and fruitful efforts of the Fifth Committee Chair, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, Mr. Janne Taalas, and of the colleagues who contributed to a consensus.

My delegation considers that in our strenuous efforts to reach an agreement there are no winners or losers, only a win for the Organization, which needs a budget. Brazil will continue to do its utmost to build consensus on an ongoing basis over the issues we were unfortunately not in a position to agree on at this time. Today we were able to arrive at a text that preserves the rules and regulations governing the budget process of this Organization while providing the necessary level of resources for implementing mandates. In that regard, we are glad that the budget process and methodology have been preserved.

Brazil is very much in favour of increasing the efficiency and the use of the Organization's resources. However, in our view, the standard against which achievement of that goal should be measured is not a simple quantification of cuts; it is whether or not we are providing the Organization with the resources necessary to ensure the adequate implementation of the mandates we have decided to adopt. In considering the regular budget of the United Nations, we must strive to strengthen the Organization's ability to effectively make a difference to the people around the world who suffer from poverty, inequality, conflicts and natural disasters. That means making resources available to the development pillar, and prioritizing it. We believe that the resolution we adopted today will be instrumental in that regard.

We also wish to highlight how important we consider the staff of the United Nations to be. Their contribution to implementing the mandates and achieving the higher ideals of the United Nations cannot be overstated.

In a final word on the workings of the Fifth Committee, the 12-point Christmas Eve agreement was painstakingly arrived at through sleepless nights, in a spirit of mutual accommodation and compromise. But we have to face the fact that the negotiating methods of the Committee border on dysfunctional. We have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure better

practices in the future — practices that guarantee the highest level of transparency and technical clarity, and that do not establish unnecessary brinkmanship as the rule. We must improve mutual trust among Member States as well as between Member States and the Secretariat in order to strengthen our Organization.

The President: I should now like to consult Members with a view to giving the floor to Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, and without setting a precedent, to invite Ms. Malcorra to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Malcorra.

Ms. Malcorra: I would like to thank everyone here for their dedication, hard work and flexibility. Their late nights and round-the-clock negotiations have paid off. The approval of a new budget for 2014-2015 is a collective achievement of all Member States, with support from the Secretariat. With that step, the United Nations is ready to continue to deliver for the world's people.

The Secretary-General also expresses his appreciation and has asked me to deliver the following message on his behalf:

“All budget years are tough. But this year has been especially difficult. The budget proposal reflected a difficult reality — how to ensure that our Organization can deliver at a time when demands on the United Nations continue to grow while funding continues to shrink. The world is turning more and more to the United Nations for answers and help across a broad spectrum of issues. We have a duty to live up to people's expectations and to meet their pressing needs. And we must uphold our obligation to Member States to make the most prudent use of the precious resources that they provide. The new budget is lower than the one for the previous biennium, reflecting our shared wish for a fiscally responsible Secretariat. We will continue to adapt and equip the United Nations to better implement its mandates. I have urged all managers to rethink our business practices, reduce overlap, embrace innovation, encourage creativity and build synergies. I have also stressed the importance of upholding the standards of

effectiveness that the Assembly has requested. It can count on our commitment.

“At the same time, I cannot hide my disappointment that the General Assembly has failed to reach agreement on two critically important reform proposals — a managed-mobility policy and strengthened arrangements for partnerships with the private sector. They were designed to significantly improve and modernize the way we operate — with staff in building a global Secretariat, and with key actors in promoting development. I sincerely hope that when discussions on these issues resume, we can bring these initiatives to fruition without any further delay.

“I would also like to reiterate that it would be unrealistic to presume that any substantial budget reduction will have no impact while mandates keep growing. The time may have come for the Assembly to consider reviewing mandated activities that may have been fulfilled or overtaken by new developments. In this era of dramatic change and growing interconnectedness, the United Nations must meet ever higher standards of effectiveness and accountability. We are determined to make the most of Members' contributions, fulfil our mandates and serve the world's people, counting on our staff.

“I wish all a healthy and happy New Year. I look forward to working together and to the support of the Assembly for our efforts to build a modern, effective, twenty-first-century United Nations.”

Statement by the President

The President: As the main part of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly comes to a close, I would like to begin by thanking each and every one of those here. Their insights, engagement and professionalism have kept the Assembly rich and active. I extend these thanks to all those in the Secretariat from the thirty-eighth floor on down, but particularly to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, which has serviced the General Assembly and its Committees so ably. The Vice-Presidents have supported me throughout the session and helped me fulfil my duties when I was unable to do so, and the various Chairs and Rapporteurs have kept the session running smoothly. Together, these collective efforts enable the nations of the world to voice their opinions and take action on the issues that concern them and

affect their populations. That in itself is no small achievement, as our United Nations Charter calls for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends.

There have been a number of impressive highlights during the sixty-eighth session. We opened the high-level week on 23 September with a meeting recognizing that we must make space for persons with disabilities in our development efforts (see A/68/PV.3). We saw the inauguration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which met under the auspices of the General Assembly and will do so under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in 2014. We adopted an outcome document that paves the way for a universal and shared post-2015 development agenda (resolution 68/6). And we held the first ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, which produced a resolution designating 26 September the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. During the general debate, more than 110 Heads of State and Government shared their platforms with us, underlining the vibrancy and centrality of our Assembly.

We then proceeded with our agenda. During this session, the Assembly has adopted 259 resolutions and took 66 decisions. The resolutions cover a wide range of issues, from nuclear disarmament to the rule of law at the national and international levels (resolution 68/116), and from financing for development (resolution 68/204) to the peaceful use of outer space (resolution 68/74). We have also seen new resolutions introduced on the right to privacy (resolution 68/167) and the safety of journalists (resolution 68/163), as well as a resolution designed to strengthen the Economic and Social Council (resolution 68/1).

Today's conclusion of the work of the Fifth Committee again underscored the need to adapt — indeed, to revitalize — the General Assembly's methods of work to fit the challenging times we live in. As the work of our Organization becomes more challenging, so do its financial and administrative needs. We therefore have to ensure that the ways in which we deal with those challenges do evolve and that the approaches of yesteryear must also evolve if we are to have a fully functional Organization. We know a priori that in a budget year, adequate time is needed to consider all aspects of what is now a fairly detailed and intricate United Nations budget.

Perhaps, then, the time has come for us look at either a dedicated session of the Committee for that important process or to introduce the budget at the outset of the Committee's work, rather than in the latter part of October, as is the current practice. And maybe the time has come for us to move to a more broad-based introduction of electronic means both for the Committee's issuance and its preliminary consideration of documents, assuming, of course, the later availability of paper versions of the relevant documents. I hope that Member States will consider these ideas in the sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly when it meets next year.

The sixty-eighth session has also had some other noteworthy firsts. For the first time, Palestine was accorded the privileges of a State in the general debate and cast its first vote in the General Assembly. Following an uncontested election to the Security Council, one Member State chose to decline its seat, which was unprecedented in our United Nations history. I very much appreciated the fact that Member States were quickly able to come to an agreement to ensure that the seat would be filled as of 1 January 2014. With that in mind, I would like to commend representatives on the resumption of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. While the issue is unquestionably a challenging one, we are determined to make our best efforts in the coming months. Finally, we saw a moving tribute to Nelson Mandela in a special meeting of the General Assembly last week, during which 53 Member States paid tribute to one of the world's most revered peacemakers.

As the main part of the session closes and we prepare for the holidays, let us be mindful that such peacemakers are sorely needed in this world. Reports of recent turmoil in our world, including in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as the ongoing conflict in Syria, of course distress us all. While responding to such upheavals does not primarily fall under the Assembly's mandate, they are very much a concern to every one of us and may at some point be brought to our collective attention. As a testament to our collective commitment to advancing global peace, I would also like to express my hopes that the Arms Trade Treaty, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, will enter into force during the sixty-eighth.

As we all know, I proposed the theme for the general debate of the sixty-eighth session as “The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage”. To that end, I announced that there would be three high-level events and three thematic debates. I am pleased that today I can share with the Assembly the dates proposed for them in 2014. The first thematic debate, on water, sanitation and sustainable energy in the post-2015 development agenda, will take place on 18 and 19 February. The first high-level event, on the contributions of women, the young and civil society to the post-2015 development agenda, will take place on 6 and 7 March, in advance of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The second thematic debate, on the role of partnerships and their contributions to the post-2015 development agenda, will take place on 8 and 9 April. The third thematic debate, on ensuring peaceful and stable societies, will take place on 24 and 25 April. The second high-level event, on the contributions to the post-2015 development agenda of South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation and information and communication technologies for development, will take place on 20 and 21 May. And the third and final high-level event, on human rights and the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda, will take place on 17 and 18 June.

Finally, in order to assess our progress and review outputs — including, we hope, those from the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing — we will convene a stocktaking event in early September. Specific information about the high-level events and thematic debates, including concept notes, will be available in early January on the website of the President of the General Assembly. I would like to thank all the Member States that have shared their ideas with me on these proposed events and thematic debates, and I look forward to their active engagement during the actual sessions.

There are a number of other such events taking place during the remainder of the sixty-eighth session that merit mention. They include, first, a thematic debate to consider the role of culture and sustainable development in formulating the post-2015 development agenda; second, the launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States and the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa; third, a high-level thematic debate on investment in Africa; fourth, an interactive dialogue

on the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2014, aimed at advancing discussions on harmony with nature and sustainable development; fifth, a series of four one-day structured dialogues for considering possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies; sixth, a special meeting during the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; seventh, the human rights treaty body review, which will conclude in 2014; eighth, an informal interactive hearing in preparation for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; and, finally, the biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Our General Assembly will play a critical role in ensuring the success of other major conferences and events in the social, economic and environmental fields that fall outside our time frame. Some of these are the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the International Decade for People of African Descent, a comprehensive review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and a special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action Beyond 2014, which will take place during the following year. We will also work to ensure that commitment and momentum are maintained towards the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, scheduled to take place in 2015, and the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, scheduled for 2016.

As promised in my statement at the start of the session (see A/68/PV.6), we will also remain focused on United Nations reform next year. I look forward to continued negotiations on Security Council reform in the early part of the year. Likewise, following a recent plenary debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly (A/68/PV.59), the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly will begin early in the new year in the form of four clusters. I look forward to more in-depth deliberation on the various issues under the leadership of the co-Chairs. On both issues, I expect the Assembly’s full cooperation and commitment to a vibrant and effective United Nations, which depends on all of us.

My team and I have very much enjoyed working with the Assembly over the last three months, and I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish during the next nine months of my tenure. Let us continue to work hard so that we can look back on our time here with a sense of pride and accomplishment. To those who are about to leave us — and here I would like to mention Ambassador Joseph Torsella of the United States and others — I wish all the best. For the rest of us, I wish everyone all the best for the remainder of 2013, and I look forward to working with all in 2014.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. AlHantouli (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, and briefly, I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation for your work, Mr. President, in presiding over the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

A short while ago, the Assembly adopted some very important resolutions and decisions that required considerable effort on everyone's part. Here, on behalf of the State of Palestine, I would like to express our deep appreciation and thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Janne Taalas for his wise and skilful leadership of the Fifth Committee, and for his valuable efforts in presenting the draft decision on the contributions of the State of Palestine to the regular budget of the United Nations. By the same token, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Member States for their support for that decision and for its adoption by consensus. We would also like to thank the Group of 77 and China and its Chair, and the Group of Arab States, for their support and efforts.

We hope that the State of Palestine's contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations will constitute

a decisive and positive step towards our acquisition of full-fledged membership in the Organization. We hope that, with the support of the whole of the Assembly, this goal will be achieved soon.

In conclusion, I hope that 2014 will be a happy and peaceful year for everyone, particularly my people, the people of Palestine, who are doing their best to make this the year that the Israeli occupation ends, freeing our people and our land and achieving the independence of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Programme of work

The President: With regard to the programme of work of the General Assembly, apart from organizational matters and items that may be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, and bearing in mind that the Assembly has already considered and taken action on the majority of items thus far, I should like to inform members that the following agenda items remain open for consideration during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly: agenda items 9 to 16, 18, 19 (a), (b) and (h), 21 (d), 29 to 31, 33 to 36, 38, 39, 41 to 47, 53, 63 (a) and (b), 67 (b), 70 (a) to (d), 85, 111, 112, 114 (b), 115 (a), (d) and (e), 116 (g), (h) and (i), 117 to 126, 128, 129, 130 to 135, and 137 to 165.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of those items on the agenda that remain open for consideration during the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly?

It was so decided.

The President: On that very pleasant note, I wish everyone happy holidays.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.