



General Assembly

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Friday, 12 December 2014, 10 a.m.
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Official Records

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Moura (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 69 (continued)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/406)

Draft resolutions (A/69/L.33 and A/69/L.37)

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

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/69/96 and A/69/303)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.40)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/84)

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): Humanitarian crises devastate the lives of millions around the world. This year we have seen reported an unprecedented number of internally displaced persons and refugees. It has also been the most dangerous year for humanitarian personnel in more than a decade. The 2014 United Nations coordinated appeal requested a record total \$16.9 billion, reflecting the vast scale of needs. One

third of that request remains unmet. The growing gap between needs and available resources means that strengthened coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance is integral.

The humanitarian resolutions adopted by the General Assembly offer us an opportunity to address the challenges we face and to build on accomplishments in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The consensual adoption of such resolutions should denote a willingness to work together in ensuring that real results are achieved to reduce the suffering of those most in need.

In that regard, we are pleased that this year's General Assembly draft resolutions on humanitarian issues underline the importance of promoting the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, including for health-care personnel who are providing essential medical care to affected communities. However, it is utterly unacceptable to us that with the unprecedented number of people in need, the States Members of the United Nations are unable to come together and recognize the capacity of local communities to participate in their own recovery. Canada will continue to support flexible, iterative approaches to programme delivery based on interaction and feedback with the beneficiaries themselves. We will also continue to underline the fundamental importance for humanitarian organizations to be able to reach people in need and provide rapid and unimpeded assistance to the most vulnerable. Being able to provide life-saving assistance to people affected by armed conflict or natural disasters is the very basis of any humanitarian response.

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(spoke in French)

The ongoing humanitarian crises in Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Iraq, among many others, continue to affect the lives of millions of people every day. Moreover, due to the Ebola epidemic, the region faces an unprecedented public-health emergency, which the Security Council has recognized as a threat to international peace and security. The whole world, including Canada, is responding, but major challenges remain as we work to overcome those crises.

As the year comes to an end, we should welcome the urgency and professionalism with which front-line humanitarian personnel, national authorities and affected communities are working to turn the tide in our fight against the Ebola outbreak. We would like to congratulate and thank the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, and her team for their determined efforts to that end and for their outstanding contribution to the international humanitarian community and to people in need. Canada will continue to focus on the three transformation pillars of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee: leadership, coordination and accountability in the field.

(spoke in English)

To face those growing challenges and the increasing scale of the needs, we welcome the opportunities provided by the Secretary-General's decision to convene a World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Canada is actively engaged in the process, including as a member of the Western Europe and Others regional steering group.

Recognizing the critical importance of preventative action, Canada recently committed \$500 million to the goal of providing vaccines to impoverished children around the world. The international community can make a vital difference in the long-term health of children by ensuring that they are protected from preventable diseases.

Reconstruction efforts to help affected communities recover from crises are equally important. One year after the devastating Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines, Canada is engaged in programming initiatives to help restore the livelihoods of those who were affected. We have committed \$20.6 million over a period of four years for reconstruction efforts, in addition to the more than \$85 million provided by the

Government of Canada as part of its promise to match every eligible dollar donated by individual Canadians to registered Canadian charities.

We express our deepest gratitude and sincere condolences to the families, friends and organizations of those who have given their lives in order to save others. Canada remains committed to playing its role with key partners to ensure the protection of vulnerable populations and to help build a world in which humanitarian values are fully respected.

Mr. Maksimych (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: The Russian Federation has traditionally supported the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations and is constantly increasing the scope of its cooperation with major organizations. We take a positive view of the progress that has been achieved by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in the reforms to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's humanitarian responses, which is especially important in the context of the growing number of humanitarian challenges.

We welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to hold a World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016. In the light of the discussion on further transformation in the humanitarian sphere, we believe it fundamentally important to retain what is set forth in resolution 46/182, which is the basis for the international machinery for humanitarian responses. We believe that the Summit will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to exchange experiences and best practices in terms of humanitarian activities. It is important that the process of preparing for the Summit be open-ended, transparent and inclusive. States, which bear full responsibility for meeting the humanitarian needs of their populations, must have a decisive voice in adopting the decisions of the Summit.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of emergency responses, the humanitarian potential at the national and local levels must be strengthened. We support the work of the United Nations system in that area. We advocate the active use of verifiable regional machinery for humanitarian response, such as, for example, participation in humanitarian operations by volunteers, or White Helmets. As an innovation in international humanitarian efforts, Russia has undertaken an initiative to create a multilateral mechanism to deal with the consequences of natural and man-made disasters, which would unite all of the centres for crisis

reaction in one global network, with a view to having an operative exchange of information and a timely reaction to disasters. That work is actively under way. We hope that the results will further enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian responses.

Russia firmly supports the scrupulous observance by humanitarian actors of the guiding principles set forth in the resolutions of the General Assembly on the provision of humanitarian assistance. We would like to emphasize the growing role of the Governments of affected countries in the initiation, organization, coordination and provision of humanitarian assistance in their national territory. That is not simply a basic principle, but without a doubt a responsibility borne by States in overcoming the suffering and satisfying the needs of their populations.

Unfortunately, we are bound to note that in some cases that principle is not adhered to. We have serious concerns regarding the difficult humanitarian situation in south-east Ukraine. With the approach of winter, as recognized by those working in international humanitarian organizations in the region, the situation is deteriorating. The scope of the destruction in Donbass is enormous. As a result of the military actions by the authorities in Kyiv, industry has been destroyed, as has key infrastructure necessary for sustaining life. These are elements that the region depends on. The ban by Kyiv of Government and financial institutions' activities have left the most vulnerable segments of the population, including retirees, veterans, the disabled and children, without basic resources. That is a violation of international humanitarian law.

In that context, the Russian Federation is increasing its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the population of Ukraine. A few days ago, we announced a contribution by the Government of Russia, in the near future and through the World Food Programme, of financial support aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to all regions of Ukraine. Russia has already sent nine convoys with humanitarian assistance and necessities such as food, medicines, construction materials and electric generators — an overall volume of 13,000 tons — to Donbass, which has suffered most from the hostilities. The Ukrainian authorities should now be informed of their contents and their itinerary, and we believe that international organizations will do so.

We believe that international organizations, first and foremost the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, could play a more significant role in those efforts and actively involve themselves in the process to alleviate the suffering of the population.

In spite of the collective measures taken by the international community to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel and United Nations staff, much remains to be done overall, as their lives and health continue to be threatened. The international community was shocked by the bombing of United Nations schools sheltering peaceful Palestinians. Officials from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East also died in July 2014 in the conflict in Gaza. Dozens of volunteers from the Red Crescent have died in Syria while carrying out their humanitarian duty. The international community was shocked by the death of a humanitarian assistant in Donetsk. That reaffirms the need for further mobilization by Member States and humanitarian organizations to strengthen the machinery for ensuring the security of humanitarian workers. It is of course essential that humanitarian organizations strictly observe the guiding principles for providing humanitarian assistance, as laid down in General Assembly resolutions.

In our view, every incidence of violence in connection with humanitarian workers should be thoroughly investigated and those responsible made accountable. In that regard, we would like to again draw attention to the vital importance of a speedy investigation into the tragic death in Donetsk of a worker from the International Committee of the Red Cross, who died, as the facts show, as a result of indiscriminate shooting from the Ukrainian forces' side.

Another important issue that we wish to focus attention on is the problem of sanctions. We firmly believe that the regrettably frequent occurrence of individual States introducing unilateral restrictions outside the purview of the Security Council exacerbates the suffering of the civilian population even more and worsens the humanitarian situation in countries affected by the sanctions.

Ms. AlGharabally (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to participate in today's debate

on strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations in the face of the global challenges threatening humankind, such as poverty, famine, disease and so forth, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which asserts that the Organization should work to maintain international peace and security by strengthening international and regional efforts, outlining policies, launching initiatives and strengthening its capacity to respond effectively to crises that result from natural disasters and other challenges. In that regard, we would like to take this opportunity to commend Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and her entire team, who have worked so hard in their efforts to strengthen United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance.

We have carefully reviewed the two reports of the Secretary-General before us today, of which the first (A/69/96) deals with the humanitarian activities of the Central Emergency Response Fund in 2013, and demonstrates the Fund's effectiveness as a tool for collective emergency response to the world's most urgent crises and for saving many lives. We welcome the 2013 record number of \$482 million allocated from the Fund to support humanitarian activities in 45 countries and territories, the roughly \$107 million for a rapid response to new or rapidly deteriorating crises and \$175 million for the underfunded emergency window. According to the report, Africa was one of the major beneficiaries of the Fund in 2013, receiving 59 per cent of allocations, owing to its numerous worsening humanitarian situations. Similarly, allocations for the Middle East have increased by more than 50 per cent compared with 2012, the result of the continuing humanitarian needs precipitated by the crisis in Syria. We commend the Fund's role in strengthening assistance through its provision of prompt financing. However, it will require increased effort on the part of the international community, as well as more donors.

With regard to the Secretary-General's report on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development (A/69/303), my country subscribes to the report's recommendations, which emphasize the right of States Members of the United Nations, in cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, to take a pre-emptive approach to humanitarian crises in order

to prevent their occurrence, and to agree on the nature of possible threats and risks and prepare for them.

What gives us great concern is the statement in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (A/69/84) on assistance to the Palestinian people, which shows that development indicators have fallen considerably in the Gaza Strip as a result of the closure of the Strip and tunnels. The Israeli Government, as the occupying Power, is continuing with its imposition of an illegal economic blockade on the Gaza Strip, which is now in its eighth year and has caused serious human suffering. In that regard, Kuwait reiterates its call on the international community to put pressure on Israel, the occupying Power, to end its aggressive practices and illegal blockade of Gaza, immediately and unconditionally, and to open all border crossings, in accordance with its international obligations.

Ever since it became independent and a Member of the Organization, the State of Kuwait has taken a principled approach based on the necessity of providing humanitarian assistance to help to bridge gaps for those in need and ensure their right to a decent living in every country, regardless of their geographic, religious or ethnic origins. International partnerships and united efforts are essential if we are to be able to alleviate human suffering. That has become integral to our approach, such that, in September 2014, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, was honoured as a humanitarian leader, in recognition of Kuwait's respect for humankind and efforts to promote the principles of peace, stability and assistance to those in need. We will continue to work with the United Nations in order to work for universal prosperity and stability at every level.

Kuwait is aware of the importance of the Central Emergency Response Fund for providing rapid emergency assistance to disaster-affected areas. Based on our desire to solidify our cooperation with the Fund and to respond at the humanitarian level to such needs, and on our belief in the important role of the specialized agencies and funds of the United Nations, we have doubled our voluntary annual donations to a number of those funds and agencies. We can only be grateful to them for their humanitarian assistance and emergency relief efforts in implementing aid and cooperation programmes in confronting all the obstacles they face.

We would also like to thank the delegation of Sweden for introducing draft resolution A/69/L.40 and all the countries that participated in drafting it.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): Today's discussion should reflect the context of the diverse humanitarian issues and highly challenging and risky operating environments in which complex emergencies take place. My delegation calls for the speedy and effective implementation of the recommendations and action plan of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, aimed at achieving its Transformative Agenda, designed to improve humanitarian leadership, coordination, accountability and transparency both at Headquarters and in the field. That is why we need to establish a rapid-response mechanism to support the deployment of experienced humanitarian personnel in the wake of humanitarian crises.

The Common Framework for Capacity-Building for Emergency Preparedness should be optimized to ensure synergy between humanitarian and development organizations' efforts so as to achieve better country readiness, feedback and mechanisms for participation. For instance, legal preparedness is an essential requirement to avoid delays in entry permits for relief personnel, goods, equipment and transport, as well as to bridge gaps in oversight. The need for timely action also requires widening the partnership within each of the regions and internationally. Likewise, engagement in global policy and operational issues undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will help improve dialogue on root causes and policy issues.

Humanitarian financing is also the key to effective aid, and on that count the consolidated appeals process can be further refined. The Central Emergency Response Fund and the humanitarian fund need to be augmented to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable, including women, youth and elderly. Finally, we must also seek solutions to make humanitarian actions relevant to the challenges of 2015 and beyond.

We are pleased to say that the OCHA Regional Office for the Caucasus and Central Asia assists the United Nations Development Programme and the Kazakhstan National Office of Disaster Management in information management, disaster preparedness and response in the region. Kazakhstan calls for maintaining

the civilian character of humanitarian assistance and supports the activities of the OCHA office in Almaty at all levels — regional, national and local. We therefore support the successful operation of OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund as an important tool that ensures predictable, adequate and timely funding of international humanitarian operations.

Kazakhstan has transformed itself from a recipient to a donor country, one that is active in Central Asia. Since 2010, Kazakhstan has provided humanitarian assistance totalling \$10 million to several countries that suffered from natural disasters — Afghanistan, Haiti, Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Cuba, Japan and others. Kazakhstan also contributed \$500,000 to the Somalia pooled fund, created at Kazakhstan's suggestion in the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

As of December 2011, Kazakhstan has been officially recognized as a member of the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. Currently, Kazakhstan is finalizing the establishment of its own agency, KazAID, for international development assistance, which will simultaneously also engage in humanitarian assistance and funding. In that regard, KazAID marks the entry of Kazakhstan as a new donor in the humanitarian community. Our financial assistance for East Africa is also under review.

Last August, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Establishment of the Central Asian Centre for Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction was signed in Almaty. It will be the focal point for the United Nations hub in Almaty that Kazakhstan plans to host in order to secure greater peace, development and stability for the region.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Consensus has emerged among Member States that the beginning of the solution to any humanitarian crisis lies in sincere recognition of its root causes, without distorting reality in the name of a political agenda, which puts pressure on countries on humanitarian grounds. The establishment of common denominators among Governments, on the one hand, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), on the other, should take place — in accordance with resolution 46/182 — in a way that attenuates humanitarian crises, instead of manipulating its prolongation to pressure countries politically. Unfortunately, that is what we are seeing with respect to the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Those

are concerns that serve a political agenda rather than efforts aimed at resolving problems.

At the outset, I would like to stress that, after four years of gaining expertise in this area, we believe that the humanitarian situation in my country requires a solution that involves emergency aid. It is one that begins by dealing with the causes of and reasons for the conflict that led to its prolongation. First of all, with regard to terrorism and the need to combat it, one cannot deal with humanitarian assistance in Syria without recognizing the responsibility of the countries that are abetting terrorists and sending terrorists from the diaspora — extremist groups handled by the intelligence services of some well-known countries. Such elements cross the borders into Syria to spread terror and violence and to systematically seize humanitarian aid.

In that way, humanitarian assistance becomes a means to prolong terrorism in certain parts of Syria. For several years now, there was avoidance of the recognition of this fact until the Security Council adopted two resolutions — resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) — recognizing the existence of terrorist groups that kill and massacre Syrians, obstruct humanitarian assistance and even target local or international humanitarian aid workers.

Nevertheless, the recognition of this fact by the Secretary-General, OCHA and various international organizations has been reluctant and half-hearted. In that regard, we are especially surprised and dismayed because those responsible deem those terrorist groups to be opposition members. That puts the problem in a false perspective in Syria, one that internationalizes the conflict at the organizational level. Today more than ever, it is incumbent upon Member States and the United Nations, as represented by the Secretary-General, OCHA and other humanitarian organizations, to implement the Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and to stop their sources of financing, in accordance with resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), so as to ensure that humanitarian assistance does not reach armed terrorist elements in a way that supports terrorism.

It is also incumbent upon Member States to adopt resolutions and to undertake a transparent investigation with respect to the terrorist networks that are working under the guise of humanitarian assistance — for example, the French parties responsible for financing

terrorism under the Pearl of Hope charity work being done in Syria since 2012 to fuel terror and terrorism. That organization is collaborating with many other terrorist organizations working inside Syria. Everyone knows that, as long as terrorism is being fuelled and there is a flow of foreign terrorists into Syria, the crisis will continue at the humanitarian and political levels. That will have a spillover effect in the entire region and throughout the world. At that point we will be moving in a vicious circle without reaching any solution with respect to combating terrorism and providing humanitarian assistance, whether for Syrians or for other peoples suffering from the artificial so-called Arab Spring, a movement that is the result of manipulation. Countries that aid terrorism in Syria are making a mockery of people's suffering and are advancing their own political agendas so as to break the Syrian Government. One example of that is that when Mr. Bernard Kouchner, France's former Foreign Minister and the co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières — which is nothing other than the right arm of the French secret service — recently visited northern Syria, he entered the country illegally, thumbing his nose at the country's sovereignty as did United States Senator John McCain before him. In spite of all that, the Syrian Government continues to discharge its duties to its citizens by combating terrorism inside the country. In a mere two days, Syria was able to kill more Islamic State and Al-Nusra Front terrorists than those killed by 1,000 raids by enemy aircraft, the alliance's air forces.

Secondly, the unilateral sanctions imposed on Syria have had serious implications by contributing to increased humanitarian suffering throughout the country, forcing many to flee to neighbouring countries, since they are no longer able to live in the interior owing to the political and moral pressures on the Syrian Government and its resources. It has been claimed that the Syrian Government has been preventing its citizen from obtaining access to humanitarian assistance, but that raises the question of why those countries are trying to politicize the humanitarian issue on the pretext of protecting civilians. The same situation existed in brotherly Libya after the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2095 (2013), and the result is what we are seeing there today. Many United Nations officials have submitted reports on this issue, most recently the 2013 report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the statement of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria at a briefing held in Geneva on 4 December 2014, which

gave updated information on the implications of the European Union and United States sanctions on Syria, which have affected every economic sector and all services in the country.

Thirdly, we have the problem of the lack of financing for the humanitarian response plan, which has not reached 47 per cent of the budget outlined for Syria in 2014. It has therefore fallen to the Syrian Government alone to cover 75 per cent of humanitarian aid on its own. In that regard, it should be understood that the politicization of humanitarian assistance channels and the insufficient amount of aid are basic reasons for the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Fourthly, concerning cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, the Government has shown itself willing to work with the United Nations in order to elaborate and implement humanitarian response plans. At the Geneva meeting on the humanitarian response for 2015, my country discussed the basic elements of future plans for the response. We are still waiting for OCHA and other active humanitarian organizations to show that they are fulfilling their mandates, particularly those based on compliance with resolution 46/182, and respecting the Security Council's resolutions on implementing humanitarian plans on the ground rather than circumventing resolution 46/182 or using Council resolutions to circumvent those humanitarian plans. Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) allows humanitarian aid to cross neighbouring countries' borders into Syria.

In that regard, I would like to explain that despite that resolution, various reports have emphasized the errors and waste made in implementing it. For three months after its adoption, and after losing \$1.5 million in financing for the humanitarian aid crossing the borders, only 230 truckloads entered Syria from neighbouring countries, representing only 5 per cent of the convoys coming from within Syria, without even mentioning the Turkish Government's refusal to let humanitarian aid cross from its side of the border. In its discussion of humanitarian access, OCHA did not point out the fact that, when humanitarian aid does cross the border, the armed groups get their hands on it, and the United Nations has no idea who they are. For example, the terrorist group known as Liwa Al-Islam got hold of a humanitarian convoy coming from Jordan. They wrote on the convoy's trucks that they were holding a gift from Liwa Al-Islam.

This is happening because of lack of coordination with the Syrian Government. Various officials and countries have attempted to circumvent resolution 2165 (2014) by trying to flout the authority of the Government of Syria and to ignore the gentleman's agreement that is part of the resolution and that implies that OCHA must cooperate with the Syrian Government and inform it about the contents of humanitarian convoys. That gentleman's agreement was disregarded mere hours after the resolution's adoption, when three diplomats from States that are permanent members of the Security Council said proudly that the convoys had entered Syria without the Government's approval. That is clearly a lie, pure and simple. Cooperation with the Syrian Government cannot be linked to lack of aid when humanitarian assistance is allowed access so that it can reach civilians, and not be seized by terrorists.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Governments that take part in the bloodshed in Syria, some of which are our neighbours, cannot claim that they are providing humanitarian assistance when they are sponsors of terrorism in my country and are imposing sanctions designed to starve the Syrian people. In that regard, I would be remiss if I did not recall the brazen collaboration between the Zionist entity and the Nusra Front in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Government has always condemned that collaboration, while requesting that United Nations officials shed light on the situation, up until the publication of the Secretary-General's most recent report on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) (S/2014/859), which recognized the existence of collaboration between Israel and the Al-Nusra Front terrorists in the Golan, through the supply of arms to the protection of terrorist camps that claim to be providing humanitarian assistance. That is happening openly and publicly in front of the UNDOF forces on the line of demarcation in the occupied Golan, United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat and the members of the Security Council.

The support voiced for Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) is not enough, since the countries backing those resolutions continue to send foreign terrorists to the countries that continue to train them openly in camps in countries that include Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. They are sending them to destroy Syria and its institutions while claiming that they represent moderate opposition. We must ask, since when do the Charter of the United Nations and

resolution 46/182 permit Governments to use terrorism as a “moderate” weapon of aggression against certain sovereign States of this Organization? Since when does the Charter authorize destruction by so-called moderate opposition groups that are no more than terrorists? Those are the questions that Member States, the Secretary-General and the Security Council must answer.

Mr. Golitsyn (Ukraine): Today we are meeting, after long rounds of negotiations, to reaffirm the importance of scaling up the humanitarian approach of the United Nations, with a view to ensuring fuller coverage of people’s needs in every sector and in every kind of humanitarian emergency. Together we are striving to make significant progress in that direction. There can be no doubt that all actors involved in providing humanitarian assistance should fully respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as is clearly stated in every relevant document of the United Nations.

The year coming to an end has been one of tremendous changes and challenges for my country. Peaceful life and development in Ukraine were fundamentally disrupted by the illegal annexation of Crimea, and damaged by the conflict that was provoked in two of the country’s eastern areas, both of which have had devastating consequences for the people and communities of the entire region. Despite a number of ceasefire agreements, serious violations are reported daily. Displacement is on the rise, and civilian lives are endangered by the irresponsible acts of illegal militants. My country is facing a situation in which 5.1 million Ukrainian citizens are living in conflict-affected areas.

Ensuring protection and relief for those especially vulnerable people is Ukraine’s key priority. We have been doing our utmost to alleviate the situation since the first months of the crisis. The Government immediately established aid and support mechanisms for the population affected by the conflict, with special attention to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and participants in anti-terrorist operations. On 20 October we passed a law on IDPs. While we are taking action, we are still relying on our supporters for help in meeting the basic humanitarian needs of those affected, particularly considering that winter has now arrived. With international expert and technical support, we have established a system for registering IDPs.

The Ukrainian authorities are taking comprehensive steps to rebuild in areas that have been restored to State control, ensure due payments of social benefits and provide vital services to residents. The decision has been taken to continue delivering gas and electricity to civilians in the areas of eastern Ukraine controlled by militants, despite significant payment arrears. Hundreds of tons of humanitarian aid have been sent to the affected region, although there are obvious obstacles to its delivery and distribution, owing to interference from militants. It should be pointed out that it is the illegal armed groups that are fully responsible for depriving the local population of social benefits, since they have seized all the funds allocated by the Ukrainian Government for social needs in the region. However, all social allowances will be kept in escrow for each individual and paid immediately after we regain control over the area.

Between August and November, Russia sent eight humanitarian aid convoys that illegally crossed Ukraine’s border without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities or any inspection by them, and without coordinating with the International Committee of the Red Cross. The contents of the convoys are largely unknown, as is the impact they may have had on humanitarian conditions in Donbas.

Ukraine is grateful for the broad humanitarian response it has received and welcomes the solidarity and multilateral cooperation demonstrated by international organizations and their determination to remain committed. Since the start of this unprecedented crisis, the Ukrainian authorities have been working in close cooperation with our supporters from the International Organization for Migration, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United States Agency for International Development, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Red Cross and many other bilateral partners. In particular, we call on our partners to support the launch of our strategic response plan and implementation of our preliminary response plan, the joint endeavours of the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations humanitarian community, which will enable thousands of Ukrainians who have been

suffering to start rebuilding their lives in a safe and stable Ukraine.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that, while humanitarian relief and support should be provided to every conflict-affected region, we must prevent and stop fuelling conflicts in the first place.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): Over the past year there has been a stark rise in global humanitarian needs, much of it due to armed conflicts, many of which are now protracted emergencies. New Zealand therefore calls on parties to all armed conflicts to work in good faith with each other and with the United Nations to end these conflicts.

New Zealand recognizes that its election to the Security Council for the 2015-2016 term imposes an additional responsibility to help with that peacemaking process. We take that responsibility seriously, and we will live up to it.

Respect for international humanitarian law is paramount for protecting civilians from the effects of armed conflict. We urge all parties to armed conflict to allow humanitarian aid to get through to those who need it. New Zealand is heartened that the international community has taken steps to promote humanitarian access, including by authorizing cross-border aid delivery into Syria. We support the extension of such authorization for humanitarian access beyond January 2015.

New Zealand is committed to the core humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence, as outlined yesterday by the Chinese Ambassador. Those principles are essential to humanitarian action and for protecting humanitarian actors. We are pleased that this year's humanitarian draft resolution (A/69/L.40) includes specific reference to the need to protect medical personnel, and to the Health Care in Danger project of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul will be a key opportunity to ensure that the humanitarian community can meet increasingly complex challenges. New Zealand therefore thanks the Secretary-General for that initiative, and we encourage all stakeholders to engage positively.

Natural disasters continue to affect millions every year. At this difficult time, our thoughts are with our friends in the Philippines. Overall, our region, the

Pacific, is particularly vulnerable to such disasters and will be at the forefront of adapting to climate change. More must be done to reduce the risk of natural disasters. We therefore call on all nations to engage fully in the Sendai Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

New Zealand is also deeply concerned at the Ebola outbreak. While much work remains to be done, we have been heartened by the international response. New Zealand is supporting the Ebola response with a package totalling \$5 million in partnership with Australia, as that country's representative indicated yesterday.

New Zealand acknowledges with regret the recently announced resignation of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos. She has been a strong and inspirational leader. We thank her for her tireless efforts, which have been a truly shining example of United Nations humanitarian policy in action. She has truly been humanitarian policy in action, in every sense of the term, at its best.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The United States wishes to reaffirm its strong support for the international humanitarian system. We remain deeply committed to working with the United Nations, its Member States and other humanitarian actors to protect and assist vulnerable individuals and communities caught up in conflict or impacted by natural disasters. With four level-3 crises in the world today, more than 50 million people forcibly displaced, the highest number since the Second World War, and Ebola in West Africa, we must continue to improve system-wide coordination and accountability, including to affected populations, strengthen leadership and include more humanitarian actors in the system's collective responses.

We would like to acknowledge the tremendous pressure that national and international humanitarian staff are under and the enormous sacrifices they make in responding to the multiple simultaneous humanitarian crises around the world. We continue to be deeply troubled by the lack of access, risks to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and attacks against medical and health-care workers, hospitals and other medical facilities, which are protected under applicable international law. Our commitment to working with the United Nations and other partners to protect and assist civilians uprooted by conflict and devastated by natural disasters remains firm. To help mitigate those risks, humanitarian actors must be able to operate in

an independent, neutral and impartial manner, and be perceived by local populations as doing so.

In addition to being fully engaged in responding to the four level-3 emergencies — in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and the Central African Republic — we are mindful that the ongoing humanitarian situations in the Sahel, Somalia and Yemen, among others, could easily slip back into major emergencies if funding is not sustained and longer-term development efforts not allowed to succeed.

We acknowledge and appreciate the humanitarian programme cycle reforms and look forward to working closely with the United Nations on further refining and improving needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring and operational review and evaluation.

We agree with efforts to better include national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the people affected by the crises in planning, assessments and response. We fully agree that information management is critical to saving lives, and we support efforts to better harness information and technology to benefit people affected by crises.

Almost 100 Member States now contribute to financing international humanitarian assistance efforts. We are hearing from many of them today. The growing number of countries involved in funding international humanitarian operations is welcome and essential to meeting the needs of more than 57 million people identified as vulnerable and requiring assistance.

The United States will participate fully in the 2015 consultations leading up to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. That will include a United States Government-hosted global thematic consultation on humanitarian effectiveness, to be held here in New York City in June 2015. We look forward to joining other Governments, United Nations agency representatives, NGOs and other actors to openly discuss the humanitarian system and the needed reforms to make the system more effective and inclusive.

Finally, the United States would like to reaffirm its continuing support for the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity. Adherence to those core principles provides a strong foundation for the rapid and effective delivery of assistance that saves lives and reduces suffering during

times of crisis. We urge the United Nations to continue its efforts to promote a principled and needs-based approach to humanitarian assistance for the benefit of all who find themselves in need of aid during times of conflict or when natural disasters strike.

Mr. Minami (Japan): The international community faces an unprecedented series of crises, and the United Nations humanitarian mechanisms are awfully overstretched. We face four level-3 crises — in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Syria and Iraq. In addition to those emergencies, the system must make every effort to confront the continuous disruptive outbreaks of humanitarian crises, such as the Ebola epidemic. Japan has resolved to continue to take on the great responsibility of those issues, alongside the international community.

In order to prevent extremism from taking root in the Middle East region, while also responding swiftly to the region's humanitarian crises, Japan is implementing \$50 million in emergency assistance for the region, as promised by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in his address to the General Assembly in September (see A/69/PV.9). As a response to the Ebola outbreak, Prime Minister Abe also announced \$40 million in additional assistance at the General Assembly. Furthermore, on 7 November, we pledged to provide further assistance totalling \$100 million.

Nevertheless, the needs are so immense that financial contributions from traditional donors alone are simply not enough. With that reality in mind, some suggest the possibility of creating a “super” Central Emergency Response Fund for level-3 emergencies — a pooled fund based on assessed contributions, which is similar to that we have for peacekeeping operations. However, creating new assessed contributions requires further discussion among humanitarian actors. And it would not be a tool that could be used immediately for the crises we face now. It is therefore crucially important to discuss not only how we finance humanitarian needs, but also how we can better address such needs.

We strongly feel that close coordination among various actors, including local Governments, donor countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, is of essential importance. In that context, my Government strongly welcomes the draft resolutions that we will adopt today. I would also like to stress the importance of the coordination mechanism of the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I would like to commend Ms. Valerie Amos, the longest-serving Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for her prominent leadership in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance among humanitarian agencies. We regret her departure from her current post and would like to extend our sincere gratitude for her dedication.

The World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in 2016 will be a great opportunity for humanitarian actors to gather and discuss various challenges in the field of humanitarian assistance. We welcome the readiness of Turkey to host the Summit.

Japan hosted a regional consultation process for North and East Asia in July in Tokyo. The participants in the consultations discussed various issues regarding the humanitarian system. Based on that discussion, we will actively participate in the thematic discussion in the preparation process for the summit. In that regard, we would like to draw attention to the gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue.

Next March, we will host the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in Sendai, Japan. Through the Conference, we will be happy to share best practices and lessons learned from the Great East Japan earthquake of March 2011, including the “build back better” concept. We would like to share the outcome of the Conference with the World Humanitarian Summit process.

Many high-level United Nations conferences are scheduled for 2015. They include the third International Conference on Financing for Development, in July, the September summit that will adopt the post-2015 development agenda, and, of course, the twenty-first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties, in Paris, on climate change. We have to be aware of the fact that, although those conferences are of monumental importance, the process of preparing for the World Humanitarian Summit should continue steadily throughout the year 2015, irrespective of those conferences.

In concluding my statement, I would sincerely like to commend the work of humanitarian organizations in helping realize more effective assistance methods, as well as the tireless effort of aid workers on the ground despite the world’s numerous humanitarian crises.

Ms. Stener (Norway): The humanitarian system faces enormous challenges in responding to the increasing humanitarian needs around the world. The gap between available resources and humanitarian needs is growing, and will continue to do so. We cannot afford to let ourselves be overwhelmed by the common challenges we know will continue to arise. We need a humanitarian system that is more fit for the future.

Principled and effective humanitarian action must lie at the very core of the future global humanitarian system. But we cannot claim to be either effective or principled if there is no accountability to affected populations and if those in need have no access to life-saving assistance.

International humanitarian law sets clear obligations for the parties to armed conflict to protect civilian populations. Still, the vast majority of victims of armed conflict are civilians. Norway fully agrees that it is the prerogative of the State to ensure that the basic humanitarian needs of its affected people are met. However, if States are unable, or unwilling, to address humanitarian needs and provide protection, humanitarian actors must be in a position to do so. That means that, in order to save lives and reduce human suffering, States and parties to conflict must grant rapid and unimpeded access to affected populations; such access must not be arbitrarily denied.

Civilians continue to pay the price for grave violations of international humanitarian law. An area of particular concern is the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which have had detrimental effects on civilian populations. Another serious concern is the high number of attacks on schools and schoolchildren that we have witnessed over the last year. We must do more to ensure that education continues for children in conflict and crises, and we must do more to protect schools and universities during armed conflict. The lack of education has both immediate and long-term effects. Schools provide continuity, safety and protection, and often food and water, when societies are disintegrating. Education delivers the knowledge and skills that are needed to reconcile and to build back better. Education is a driver for development and for finding a way out of the unprecedented number of complex humanitarian crises. We hope that the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict will be an effective tool in the efforts to prevent the use of schools and higher education institutions for military purposes during conflict.

Sexual and gender-based violence continues to target civilians, particularly women and girls. It is too often coupled with impunity and a lack of health services, including sexual and reproductive health care. Ensuring the rights of women and girls in humanitarian crises is key to effective humanitarian action.

Medical facilities and health workers are increasingly not protected in crises and conflicts; in fact, they are often under direct attack. We are concerned about the long-term consequences for the civilian populations and the resilience of health systems in countries affected by attacks.

The obligation to protect medical missions in armed conflict is set out in international humanitarian law. The gaps are not due to a lack of norms, but a lack of implementation and respect.

In conclusion, let me underscore Norway's strong support for a more inclusive, effective and better-equipped humanitarian system. In that regard, we would like to commend the efforts and achievements of outgoing Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos. We furthermore welcome the Secretary-General's call for new candidates and look forward to an open and competitive process in selecting the right person for one of the most important and challenging jobs in the world.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the progress of the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system (A/69/96 and A/69/303). We also would like to commend outgoing Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos for her efforts to ensure effective coordination in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The world continues to face an increasing number of natural and man-made disasters. Although our collective capacity to respond to those challenges increases too, significant loss of life, damage and the long-lasting impacts caused by various humanitarian crises remain a cause of grave concern. The effective coordination of humanitarian assistance and cooperation among the relevant stakeholders are essential. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs plays a central role in realizing those goals and enabling the humanitarian community to better function together.

As the nature of humanitarian crises changes, the humanitarian system must evolve appropriately to adapt so as better to respond to those in need. We

must all be cognizant of the fact that humanitarian aid and engagement mean not only reaching those in need, but also investing in peace and security. There is a strong link between them. With that understanding, we commend the Secretary-General for his initiative to hold the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016.

Turkey continues to support the Summit secretariat in its efforts to maintain and develop a holistic, inclusive and comprehensive approach in the preparation process. We look forward to working together with all Member States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners, including civil society and non-governmental organizations. The Summit process, which is well under way, enables Member States and all the relevant stakeholders to address the issues of aid effectiveness, serving the people in need, innovation and risk management, with the aim of sharing best practices and broadening partnerships in the humanitarian field.

Adopting a comprehensive approach to humanitarian efforts, including disaster risk management, building the resilience of communities and institutions as well as early response and recovery, is necessary. We believe that the World Humanitarian Summit, together with the post-2015 development agenda efforts, including work on the sustainable development goals, climate change and the post-Hyogo Framework for disaster risk reduction, will mark a new era in our understanding and conduct of risk management and humanitarian assistance.

As the crisis in Syria enters its fourth year, the suffering of the Syrian people continues while the ramifications of the conflict become more alarming. As our hopes continue to find a long-lasting political solution to the crisis in Syria, Turkey will continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Syrian people, in close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations. The much-needed support of the international community must be stepped up to meet the needs of Syrians while building the resilience of the host communities, which endure tremendous pressures.

Unfortunately, once again, we have heard baseless allegations made by one delegation. Those are futile attempts to divert attention from the enormous destruction and human suffering caused by the Syrian regime. What we are doing for the brotherly Syrian people needs no further explanation. It is being done before the eyes of the international community, in close

cooperation with international organizations, including United Nations agencies.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Turkey has to date spent more than \$4.5 billion of its national budget for Syrians in Turkey. However, our assistance to other humanitarian emergencies also continues, covering a wide geographical area, including the Central African Republic, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia and Ukraine. The *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* indicates that Turkey became the third-largest Government donor in 2013.

As part of our response to the most recent Ebola outbreak, we aim to continue our bilateral assistance to the most-affected countries and to support the African Union. We will also work with our partners during our presidency of the Group of 20 to explore new, flexible emergency-response mechanisms to address the economic and social effects of similar crises.

Turkey continues to contribute to the Central Emergency Response Fund. Our contributions have reached \$2.25 million since the Fund's inception.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the report (A/69/303) of the Secretary-General and endorses its analysis and recommendations.

Switzerland, too, would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos for her tireless commitment in leading the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

At the outset, Switzerland expresses its deep concern at the conclusions of the negotiations on draft resolution A/69/L.40, on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance, which should be adopted by consensus today. It is alarming that, year after year, due to the intransigence of some Member States, it remains impossible to make progress at the normative level on central humanitarian issues such as access and accountability to affected populations. The humanitarian system has never faced greater challenges, yet we are unable to respond to a critical humanitarian imperative — the need to be accountable to those we provide assistance.

Switzerland would like to focus on four points in this debate.

First, Switzerland notes with concern that the level of funding for humanitarian appeals continues to

fall, while needs continue to grow, thereby impacting the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. To narrow that gap, we must improve risk prevention and develop new partnerships and closer cooperation among development and humanitarian actors. Switzerland recognizes the efforts made in recent years to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations humanitarian response system, in particular in terms of leadership and coordination. However, much remains to be done to improve accountability to affected populations. Only by systematically putting those populations and their needs at the centre of humanitarian activities can such activities become more effective. That may sound obvious. In practice, however, humanitarian planning and response do not take the voices of affected populations sufficiently into account. Effective humanitarian action must also take account of the specific context. Above all, it must respect the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence at all times. Those universally recognized principles must never be called into question.

In addition to enhancing the effectiveness of the international humanitarian response system, it must be recalled that crisis-affected States themselves bear the primary responsibility for meeting the needs of, and providing assistance to, their populations. At the same time, interaction and interoperability among stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, civil society, regional and international organizations, armed forces and the private sector, are becoming increasingly important. Strong partnerships among those actors must therefore to be fostered more systematically, so as to strengthen the impact of humanitarian action on the affected populations.

Secondly, with regard to the protection of, and access to, beneficiaries, Switzerland is concerned by the great price paid by those affected by conflict, including displaced persons. The same applies to humanitarian personnel, who are coming under attack in unprecedented numbers. The parties to a conflict have a responsibility to protect civilian populations, as well as aid and relief workers, including medical staff. Such personnel must enjoy the freedom of movement they need to carry out their duties. Switzerland would like to recall that swift, unhindered access to civilian populations in need must be guaranteed by all parties to a conflict. Switzerland also actively supports initiatives to that end, such as the recent publication of two

manuals aimed at improving the ability of humanitarian organizations to gain access to affected populations.

Thirdly, where risk management and reducing vulnerability are concerned, we are seeing more frequent occurrence of natural disasters. They are being further exacerbated by a variety of global factors. Climate change, population growth, unplanned urbanization and food- and water-related insecurity are making populations increasingly vulnerable. Faced with the recurrence and greater severity of such crises, the international humanitarian response system is being stretched beyond its capacity, and henceforth it cannot cope with the urgent needs of millions of vulnerable people. It is a matter of urgency that we move away from a crisis-management approach to one based on managing risk. Prevention pays off. It is essential to focus on reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening the resilience of local communities. To that end, further actions must be taken to align planning and risk analysis processes between humanitarian aid and development, specifically by means of shared, objective evaluation data. The post-2015 development agenda and the World Humanitarian Summit process are opportunities that must be seized.

Fourthly, the process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit, scheduled for 2016 in Istanbul, is a unique opportunity to respond to the current and future challenges faced by the humanitarian community. Switzerland is very involved in the World Humanitarian Summit process. My country will host global consultations in October 2015. We would like a substantial dialogue on the issues covered by the summit process to take place more regularly at the global level, in New York and Geneva in particular. Calm discussions in an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness among the various parties concerned would contribute to the successful outcome of the process.

Finally, at the Istanbul Summit it will be crucial to translate the expectations of the various regions into concrete recommendations and to make the voices of the affected populations heard. We hope that the process will enable us to draw up a realistic and ambitious agenda for post-2016 humanitarian action. We also hope that rigorous monitoring will ensure genuine progress. Rest assured that Switzerland will do all that it can to support the success of the World Humanitarian Summit.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba appreciates the United Nations system's work in the area of humanitarian support and advocates its strengthening.

My delegation would like to reiterate its unconditional support for the heroic efforts of the Palestinian people in their struggle to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. They are the victims of one of the most prolonged humanitarian crisis facing the Organization, which requires particular attention in this debate. It is essential that efforts be redoubled to end the injustice committed against this people and for the question of Palestine to be resolved in all its aspects, including a just solution to the difficult situation of Palestinian refugees.

Cuba reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its firm and resolute support for all of the actions aimed at promoting recognition of the Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and their right to become a full Member of the United Nations. The most recent massacre committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip caused the death of over 2,000 Palestinians, the majority of them children, women and the elderly, and resulted in more than 11,000 injured, many with permanent disabilities, and the forced displacement of more than one third of the population. The destruction of more than 5,000 houses, civilian infrastructure and basic services networks has aggravated the already difficult humanitarian crisis in Gaza as a result of the illegal blockade and the ensuing shortage of all kinds of goods.

Cuba calls for an end to the prolonged illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, the immediate, unconditional and complete lifting of the cruel blockade of Gaza, as well as the opening of the border-control checkpoints in order to allow for free and permanent access to humanitarian assistance, the provision of essential goods and the facilitation of the movement of people in and out of Gaza. We view with extreme concern the large increase in the number of households that face food insecurity — an increase from 27 per cent in 2011 to 33.5 per cent in 2012. Broken down into regions, 57 per cent of the homes in Gaza and 17 per cent in the West Bank faced food insecurity in 2013. In absolute values, that translates into 1.5 million Palestinians suffering from food insecurity.

Cuba fully supports the Palestinian initiative for a Security Council resolution to set a deadline for an end of the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories that began in 1967 and to make it possible for the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination in an independent Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

The construction and expansion of illegal settlements call into doubt Israel's seriousness about peace negotiations and endanger the actual process. In practical terms, those policies prevent the existence of a Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders and the possibility of finding a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Cuba condemns those policies and practices that violate international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/ES-10/273), and demands that an immediate end be put to all of those illegal practices.

Humanitarian assistance should be carried out with the full cooperation of the Government concerned. In that connection, it is important to respect the sovereignty of Syria and to work with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic so that humanitarian aid does not become a political weapon against the Syrian Government.

The United Nations has an obligation to respect the principles governing humanitarian assistance for the victims of conflict and humanitarian emergencies. The victims of such conflicts trust the ability of the Organization, which has accumulated experience in the area. Respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law are essential to bring aid to those who need it. But the ultimate solution is to end conflicts, which in the final analysis constitute the core of the problem. Cuba will continue to work to that end, together with the other Member States.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Ms. Christensen (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): For the third consecutive year, the Philippines has been hit by a climate-related disaster that has had a devastating impact on the lives of the affected people and regions.

Luckily, the last storm that hit the Philippines did not wreak as much havoc on the lives of the affected people as did the previous two, thanks in large part to the efforts of national and local authorities, the evacuation of over 1 million people before Typhoon Hagupit made landfall and the resiliency of the people of the Philippines. In addition to the damage caused by the strength of the storm, including estimates of 30 to 60 per cent of housing having been damaged close to the track of the storm in Eastern Samar, the slow-moving Hagupit also caused significant flooding and some landslides, which exacerbated the situation, especially with regard to infrastructure, crops and livelihoods.

As clearly evident from the impact of such disasters on the Philippines, which has sustained losses amounting to 5 per cent of its gross domestic product every year since 2008, the impact of disasters on poor countries and rapidly growing middle-income countries is disproportionately high. According to the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/303), disaster-related economic losses have exceeded \$100 billion for the fourth consecutive year.

Given the frequency and severity of such climate-related disasters and their devastating impact, it is essential that efforts to adapt to climate change and efforts to reduce disaster risk be closely linked. That requires coordinated and comprehensive integration of such considerations in private and public planning and investment, and in the humanitarian and development agendas of all actors. It also requires prioritizing disaster-risk management and coping strategies for affected communities themselves and increasing efforts for public awareness and education regarding disaster and climate risk.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) works in partnership with its 189 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and supports them in their role as auxiliaries to their public authorities. In that context, the IFRC works with national societies in building resilience by strengthening the preparedness and capacities of communities to better respond to, and recover from, disasters, to promote actions that mitigate the adverse effects of hazards and to protect development gains from the impact of disasters.

Since the opening of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Member States and the United Nations system have prioritized action on the Ebola

virus disease at numerous meetings, including in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The IFRC is grateful for the leadership of the affected countries, and in particular for the national staff and volunteers who are fighting to turn the tide of the outbreak. We are also grateful to all the countries that have been supporting those efforts with financial, human and logistical resources, as well as to the Secretary-General and his envoys, including the team of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, for their tireless efforts and support.

The IFRC and its member national societies have been responding to this emergency from the outset, even before the magnitude of the crisis and its impact on the whole region and beyond became clear. As we recognize Ebola as a complex global crisis, we must all work together in a coordinated, scaled-up and sustained effort. We need to be vigilant, persistent and equipped to respond to new challenges as they emerge.

To defeat Ebola, we need to simultaneously educate communities, isolate and treat patients, trace and monitor contacts, provide psychosocial support and safely and respectfully bury those killed by the disease. We need to reach remote towns and villages and explain how the virus is transmitted, persuade people to change behaviours contributing to the spread of the disease and stop the fear, the misconception and the stigmatization. At the same time, we should not ignore the impact of the crisis on overall essential services, food security and the livelihoods of entire communities.

In the longer term, it is vital that we learn the lessons and invest in the health-care systems of the affected countries. The epidemic has further weakened already weak health systems that had limited resources for sustaining essential health services to handle other disease and pressures. As the United Nations has highlighted, even as we focus intensely on the immediate threat, it is not too soon to start helping the affected countries recover.

Finally, as the General Assembly gears up for the final phase of the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, and as we prepare for the convening of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Sendai, Japan, and the engagement with the World Humanitarian Summit, our main focus in all these processes has been to work with Member States and partners to adopt policies and recommendations

that strengthen communities, making them more resilient and providing them with the capacity to resist shocks, manage risks and bounce back from disasters and emergencies. That capacity has, until now, been lost in the gap between humanitarian and development agendas.

As we engage actively in those processes, the main platform through which the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can collectively engage with States and agree on common agendas and commitments remains the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Our thirty-second International Conference will be convened in Geneva in December 2015. We look forward to working with the States parties to the Geneva Conventions in preparation for the Conference.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 45/6, of 16 October 1990, I now call on the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Spoerri (International Committee of the Red Cross): Improved coordination mechanisms, the development of guidelines and the adoption of new technologies have made it easier over the years for the humanitarian sector to better address the needs and aspirations of vulnerable groups. In recent years, the need to uphold human dignity in all circumstances has also been repeatedly reaffirmed in various forums and through the adoption and ratification of key international legal instruments, including in the field of international humanitarian law.

Despite all that progress, however, from the perspective of civilians affected by armed conflict, the outlook is desperately bleak. In 2014, there have been record numbers of people displaced by conflict and other forms of armed violence, reportedly exceeding 50 million for the first time since the Second World War. Although overall humanitarian funding has grown significantly, the gap between resources and needs has grown even further. At the same time, lack of access — irrespective of the reasons for it — has often left millions of people beyond the reach of even the most basic humanitarian assistance and protection.

Many armed conflicts drag on for years, sometimes decades, while new ones erupt, marked by serious violations of international humanitarian law, such as indiscriminate attacks, direct attacks on civilians, including health-care personnel, and massive

destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods. That leads to the flight of skilled workers, chronic poverty and poor prospects for sustainable recovery. To reverse those trends, States have a duty to better prevent and resolve conflicts and to improve protection and assistance for those caught up in armed conflict and violence. Humanitarian actors are concerned only with the latter task and can only play a subsidiary role in that.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a mandate to work for the faithful application of international humanitarian law. To that end, it is constantly engaged in confidential discussions with all parties. Its purpose is to secure not only acceptance for its presence based on trust, but also respect for the rules of international humanitarian law.

While the responsibility for complying with humanitarian law lies primarily with the parties to a conflict, all States have a role to play in that regard. One way of doing so is to explore new avenues for developing effective compliance mechanisms, which is an important topic on the agenda of the upcoming International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to be held at the end of 2015 in Geneva. Most importantly, however, States should demonstrate their political commitment, notably by incorporating humanitarian rules in domestic law and training their military forces and others who may be called upon to exercise authority in the event of armed conflict. The ICRC further recalls the legal obligation undertaken by all States, when they ratified the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, to respect and ensure respect for the Conventions.

Providing an adequate response to the magnitude and complexity of humanitarian needs generated by contemporary conflicts requires a holistic response and the active involvement of a wide range of actors. The ICRC is committed to engaging with all humanitarian and development actors who are actively and effectively helping to improve the lives of people affected by conflict. The aim is not for all humanitarian actors to behave in the same way, but rather to draw on their individual strengths while fully respecting their respective mandates and expertise.

For the ICRC, a humanitarian response is best served by maintaining distinct humanitarian coordination processes whereby actors operate side by side in a spirit of complementarity and collective responsibility. We

see the added value of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in its unique network of global and local humanitarian actors working in accordance with those principles, with access to those who are vulnerable and in need of protection and assistance, whether as a result of armed conflict, natural disaster or other causes. With wide-ranging expertise that covers almost all domains of humanitarian action, the Movement is striving to improve its own coordination mechanisms. We look forward to reporting in greater detail on the progress made in that regard at the International Conference at the end of 2015.

Humanitarian coordination has value only in so far as it translates into effective protection and assistance on the ground. That in turn means that humanitarian workers must have access to people in conflict areas and be able to engage with all belligerents. Unfortunately, that is becoming more and more difficult. Recent years have seen profound changes in the way conflicts are waged, with ever-increasing dangers for all humanitarian workers deployed in the field, whether from the United Nations system, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement or local or international non-governmental organizations.

The same holds true for health-care personnel. Over the past two and a half years, the ICRC has recorded 2,400 violent incidents against health-care workers and facilities in 23 countries around the world. Those figures speak for themselves. We are encouraged to see that there is wide support for that cause and that steps are being taken on a number of fronts to improve the situation.

Humanitarian workers are well aware that operating in conflict settings is inherently dangerous and will always entail certain safety risks. But it is unacceptable that they be deliberately targeted by those seeking to gain a political, military or economic advantage. Such acts are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. We must do everything in our power to prevent them.

For States, that includes the duty to investigate and bring to justice the suspected perpetrators. States must also seek to avoid blurring the line between political and military initiatives, on the one hand, and humanitarian action, on the other.

For humanitarian organizations, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing security risks. Some emphasize physical protection alongside armed

escorts, or try to operate from a safe distance using local staff, private contractors or local partners to implement their programmes. For its part, in certain exceptional cases, the ICRC has resorted to some of those measures. But it puts much greater emphasis on being accepted by all sides as a means of ensuring the safety of its staff. In our opinion, no amount of modern technology or so-called remote control can substitute for direct and regular contact with beneficiaries, weapons-bearers and the authorities controlling the areas where we operate. Such proximity with affected communities affords us a clear understanding of people's needs, aspirations and physical and psychological well-being, as well as of the causes and consequences of any protection problems that may arise.

Close contact with all the relevant armed forces and organized armed groups allows us to pursue a confidential dialogue through which the ICRC can bring humanitarian issues to their attention and call upon them to take corrective measures.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies abide by the Movement's fundamental principles and are the ICRC's primary partners. Its volunteers are often the first to arrive on the scene, and we have daily proof of their remarkable dedication and courage in performing their humanitarian mission. Given their unique operational capacity and understanding of local conditions, national societies are often the preferred partners of United Nations agencies as well, particularly in polarized settings where the United Nations agencies struggle to operate freely due to a lack of acceptance and security.

The ICRC welcomes such cooperation when it can help deliver desperately needed relief, but underlines the importance of not overstressing national societies' capacities and, above all, not undermining their acceptance as neutral organizations. To that end, their cooperation must be tailored to avoid giving the impression that national societies operate under the authority of United Nations agencies. Governments must also grant national societies sufficient autonomy to enable them to carry out their humanitarian mission in accordance with the fundamental principles.

The basic assumption that humanitarian actors who adhere to humanitarian principles will be granted access is increasingly being challenged on a variety of fronts. Some Governments see humanitarian action as a threat to their sovereignty, despite the

fact that existing humanitarian law strikes a balance between sovereignty concerns and the imperatives of humanitarian assistance.

Similarly, some non-State actors suspect humanitarian organizations of having a political or military agenda. A growing number question the validity of our humanitarian principles or the approach that should underpin our action. In all of those cases, the results include obstacles to acceptance and access, whether in the form of denied visas and other administrative hurdles, thwarted attempts to contact leaders with decision-making authority, outright refusals to permit independent humanitarian action to go ahead, or even threats and violence against our staff. Because the consequences of all of that are so dire for those who depend on humanitarian relief, it is imperative that the international community redouble its efforts to reach a renewed political consensus backing a political humanitarian action.

In conclusion, it is our hope that the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit will further the dialogue and lead to tangible progress. The Summit should not focus solely on technical and peripheral issues, but instead address the major factors affecting the current erosion of the humanitarian endeavour. The ICRC stands ready to take an active part in the discussions aimed at clarifying the purpose and relevancy of future humanitarian action.

Last year we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of the ICRC and of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This year is the 150th anniversary of the original Geneva Convention, which was adopted to improve the condition of the sick and wounded in war. As the nature of armed conflict evolved, subsequent generations were inspired to continue developing humanitarian law and the protection and assistance available for the victims. Today we have a shared responsibility to take up that mantle.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 69 and its sub-items (a) to (c).

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/69/L.33, A/69/L.37 and A/69/L.40.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.40, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”, I wish to put on the record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

By paragraph 53 of draft resolution A/69/L.40, the Assembly would welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to hold the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2016, aimed at sharing knowledge and best practices in the humanitarian field to improve the coordination, capacity and effectiveness of humanitarian response. It would request the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to ensure an inclusive, consultative and transparent preparatory process. And it would encourage Member States and stakeholders to participate in and contribute to the process and outcome of the summit, as well as encourage the Secretary-General to further engage Member States regarding the process and outcome of the Summit.

Pursuant to the request set out in paragraph 53, the first World Humanitarian Summit is to be held in 2016 in Istanbul. It is understood that all issues related to the Summit, including the date, format, organization and scope, are yet to be determined. Accordingly, in the absence of modalities for the Summit, it is not possible, at the present time, to estimate the potential cost implications of the requirements for meetings and documentation. Upon a decision on the modalities, format and organization of the Summit, the Secretary-General will submit the relevant costs of such requirements in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/69/L.40 would not give rise to any financial implications under the programme budget.

The Acting President: The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.33, entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document,

the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.33: Armenia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mongolia, San Marino, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.33?

Draft resolution A/69/L.33 was adopted (resolution 69/133).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.37, entitled “Twentieth anniversary of the participation of volunteers, White Helmets, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.37: Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.37?

Draft resolution A/69/L.37 was adopted (resolution 69/134).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.40, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.40: Andorra, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia,

Guatemala, Israel, Mexico, Monaco, Poland, San Marino, Switzerland and Turkey.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.40?

Draft resolution A/69/L.40 was adopted (resolution 69/135).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore on a point of order.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): Singapore would like to raise a point of order on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with reference to the issue of the order of speakers under this agenda item.

ASEAN States members have considered sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 to the annex to resolution 65/276, on the participation of the European Union (EU) in the work of the United Nations, which states that:

“In accordance with the present resolution, the representatives of the European Union, in order to present positions of the European Union and its member States as agreed by them, shall be:

“Invited to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly, in accordance with the order of precedence as established in the practice for participating observers and the level of participation”.

Therefore, in keeping with the letter and spirit of resolution 65/276, ASEAN States members are of the opinion that the EU observer delegation, in its capacity as observer, should kindly speak after all regional and major groupings that are represented by States, unless the EU is represented also by a Member State.

That is the principle application of resolution 65/276. Hence, ASEAN would request that an ASEAN State member, when speaking on behalf of the group, speak before the European Union if the latter is represented by the EU observer delegation.

The Acting President: I have been informed by the Secretariat that the list of speakers is built in accordance with resolution 65/276 and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856. The General Assembly takes note of the statement by the representative of Singapore.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 69 and its sub-items (a) to (c).

Agenda item 31

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Note verbale from the Permanent Mission of China transmitting the report of the Kimberley Process (A/69/622)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.39)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of China to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.39.

Mr. Wei Chuanzhong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Pursuant to paragraphs 32 and 33 of resolution 68/128, as Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2014 I wish to present to the current session of the General Assembly the report (A/69/622, annex) on the implementation of the Kimberley Process, and to introduce, on behalf of the Process, draft resolution A/69/L.39, entitled “The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts”.

The draft resolution was prepared and submitted by China. The co-sponsors of the draft resolution include Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay and the United Kingdom. I thank the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.39 for their support. I also thank all parties for their participation in the consultations and for their efforts.

The relevant language in the draft resolution is taken from the communiqué adopted by all members by consensus at the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process that took place in Guangzhou, China, on 14 November 2014. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their professional and constructive contributions to their negotiations on the draft resolution, and for achieving consensus. I look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution.

I would like to point out that the draft resolution is a consensus text and, as is the usual practice, the General Assembly adopts it by consensus after the current Chair presents it each year. I therefore introduce this draft resolution as requested by the resolution 68/128. On behalf of China, I am honoured to serve as Chair of the Kimberley Process for this year.

In 2002, ministers and leaders of delegations from 37 countries reaffirmed their commitment to the effective control of the trade in rough diamonds. Since its inception, the international certification scheme for rough diamonds has included 54 participants representing 81 countries, including the 28 States members of the European Union (EU) represented by the European Commission.

In addition, we are very pleased to see the participation of Greenland through the EU in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Apart from the member States representing national Governments, civil society has also shown much interest and participated in the Kimberley Process. Furthermore, the Kimberley Process has received important contributions from such industry representatives as the World Diamond Council and the Association of African Diamond Producers, as well as the Diamond Development Initiative. The Kimberley Process has enormous responsibilities, as the scheme has an important bearing not only on stability, people's livelihoods and economic development in the vast diamond-producing areas, but on the livelihoods of millions of people around the world.

The draft resolution acknowledges the progress made by the Kimberly Process in the following areas: strengthening the implementation of the peer review system, increasing the transparency and accuracy of statistics, promoting research into the traceability of diamonds, promoting inclusiveness by broadening the level of involvement by Governments, industry and civil society in the Kimberley Process, fostering a sense of ownership by participants, improving information and communication flows and enhancing the capacity of the Process to respond to emerging challenges.

The draft resolution expresses appreciation to China, Guinea, Australia and Guyana for receiving review visits in 2014, welcomes the commitment of those countries to continuously open their certification system to reviews and improvements, and calls upon all participants to invite and receive review visits,

in accordance with the peer review system of the Kimberley Process.

The draft resolution takes note of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), which ends the measures set out in resolution 1643 (2005) to prevent importation by any State of rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire. It also notes that, in its 2014 final communiqué, the Kimberley Process plenary meeting accepted the invitation of Côte d'Ivoire to host a review visit in early 2015, in line with the timing and obligations set out in resolution 2153 (2014). It also encourages Côte d'Ivoire to continue implementing the recommendations in the review mission report, its transition strategy and post-embargo plan of action. The draft resolution encourages the friends of Côte d'Ivoire to continue providing support to Côte d'Ivoire for the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, as well as for its continued participation in regional cooperation and law enforcement activities, as requested by resolution 2153 (2014). The draft resolution also encourages the Kimberley Process to continue to actively collaborate with the United Nations Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, established pursuant to Security Council 1584 (2005), and with Côte d'Ivoire, aiming at the resumption of trade in rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire.

The draft resolution welcomes the initiative of Kimberley Process participants in West Africa to enhance their cooperation in the implementation and policy harmonization of the Process by adopting a regional approach for the Mano River region, and encourages countries in that region, the technical team, the Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development project and other implementing partners to continue their work.

The draft resolution notes that the Kimberley Process plenary meeting reaffirmed its administrative decision on ensuring that diamonds from the Central African Republic are not introduced into the legitimate trade, as approved by written procedure on 11 July 2014, acknowledged the progress made by the Central African Republic on the implementation of its work plan and road map for addressing issues of non-compliance with Kimberley Process Certification Scheme minimum requirements and strengthening the internal control system. The draft resolution also encourages the Central African Republic to continue working closely with the African Union, relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), the

international community and neighbouring countries on issues concerning Certification Scheme compliance issues.

The draft resolution notes the decision of the plenary meeting regarding the participation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Kimberley Process, welcomes the special efforts made by China, as Chair of the Kimberley Process, in relation to that matter and invites the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to continue its efforts towards full integration into the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme through the steps outlined in the Kimberley Process communiqué of 30 November 2012.

The draft resolution also notes the commitment of the Kimberley Process to continue dialogue on the decision-making mechanism and on the definition of conflict diamonds, in accordance with the final communiqué of the plenary meeting held in Johannesburg in November 2013. It also acknowledges that the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process adopted amendments to the administrative decision on the participation of observers in the work of the Process, clarifying the nature of the participation of their representatives in the events and/or activities of the Process.

Moreover, I regret to point out that, at the plenary meeting this year, we failed to elect a Vice-Chair for the Kimberley Process in 2015. We had two candidates, namely, the United Arab Emirates and Australia, but the plenary could not reach an agreement on which country would take the vice-chairmanship. Hence, the Chair of the Process will continue consultations on this matter.

With regard to the future development of the Kimberley Process, we note that there have been changes since the creation of the Process, in 2003, in particular on the part of some industry and civil society organization participants. We are willing to adhere to the principle of consensus so that the process can continue and grow and be able to respond to daunting challenges in future.

I wish to thank the Republic of South Africa for all its contributions to the Kimberley Process. The first meeting of the Process was held in South Africa, and we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Process there last year. South Africa has left a deep impression on all participants of the Process. In that regard, I wish to especially thank Ambassador Nhlapo of South Africa,

the former Chair, who is no stranger to many people inside this institution. I also wish to congratulate Angola on its election as Chair of the Process in 2015, and look forward to seeing even greater achievements of the Process under the leadership of Angola, a major diamond producer.

Finally, I wish to thank once again all those States that have supported the draft resolution and ask the Assembly to take note of the annual report on the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and to adopt the proposed draft text, as has been the case in previous years.

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

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States, which act as a single participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, would like in the first place to commend the People's Republic of China for its successful chairmanship of the Kimberley Process and to welcome the results achieved, so far as they illustrate the important efforts deployed to continue strengthening the Kimberley Process and to confront the challenges of the future.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme's credibility as an international process depends on effective implementation and enforcement by its participants. In that regard, the European Union welcomes the endorsement of the Working Group on Monitoring of a guidance document on a new template for annual reporting. We also welcome the memorandum of understanding between the European Union, Belgium and the People's Republic of China on bilateral electronic exchange of Kimberley Process certificates, which builds on the data-sharing platform developed between the European Union and India as presented at the Kimberley Process plenary meeting in Johannesburg in 2013. The European Union considers this a good-practice example for all Kimberley Process participants, particularly international diamond trading

centres, to enhance transparency and information sharing.

As Chair of the Kimberley Process Working Group on Monitoring, the European Union has actively contributed to strengthening the implementation of the Certification Scheme and encourages participants to continue committing themselves to enhanced scrutiny through Kimberley Process peer review visits, as well as to substantive annual reports. The European Union would in particular like to express appreciation to Australia, Guinea and Guyana for having hosted review visits in 2014, and to the countries that have invited review visits in 2015-2016, noting that the administrative decision on peer review calls for all Kimberley Process participants to host a review visit every three years. We firmly believe that the consistent use of these implementation tools will strengthen the ability of the Process to tackle illicit trade in conflict diamonds. We call on all participants to step up efforts in this respect.

The European Union welcomes the fruitful work done during the year, notably the commitment of the recent Kimberley Process plenary meeting to consider relevant recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force report related to risks in the diamond supply chain and the agreement to assess those recommendations in the context of ongoing efforts.

The European Union welcomes the efforts of the Kimberley Process to assist the authorities of the Central African Republic in responding to the situation of violence that risked rough diamonds from conflict areas entering the diamond supply chain and led to the temporary suspension in trade in rough diamonds from the Central African Republic by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The European Union welcomes the Kimberley Process's efforts to monitor the situation and provide technical assistance to the Central African Republic and neighbouring countries with a view to enhancing their capacity to detect conflict diamonds entering legitimate trade. Furthermore, the European Union appreciates the efforts made by the Central African Republic authorities on the implementation of its work plan and road map for addressing issues of non-compliance with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme's minimum standards. We welcome the fact that the plenary meeting determined that a review mission should go to the Central African Republic as soon as possible to verify the situation and see what further support can and should be provided.

In the light of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), Kimberley Process engagement with Côte d'Ivoire has illustrated the positive role that the Scheme can play in situations where the production of, and trade in, diamonds might affect peace and security. The European Union welcomes the good cooperation with the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire in meeting the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme's requirements, which led to the lifting of the United Nations embargo over trade in rough diamonds in resolution 2153 (2014). The Union is determined to further support Côte d'Ivoire's efforts in its transition strategy and road map towards the resumption in the trade of rough diamonds, enabling the proceeds of Ivorian diamonds to contribute to recovery and development of the country.

In that context, through its Instrument for Stability, the European Union is providing technical assistance for promoting the formalization of the artisanal mining sector and to reinforce the country's chain of custody through the Property Rights and Artisanal Diamonds for Development programme, which is jointly funded together with the United States Agency for International Development. The Antwerp World Diamond Centre, with the support of Belgium, has also provided a capacity-building programme on diamond evaluation to the Ministry of Mines of Côte d'Ivoire.

With regard to other countries in West Africa, the European Union welcomes the Kimberley Process's continued engagement with Liberia under Security Council resolution 2079 (2012), as regional cooperation remains key to ensuing stability in the region. In that context, the Union also very much welcomes the initiatives from participants in the Mano River region to enhance their cooperation on the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme implementation and policy harmonization efforts, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), and the Kimberley Process's efforts to support that work by establishing the technical support team that regularly reports to the Kimberley Process Working Group on Monitoring. The European Union regrets the fact that the Republic of Liberia, the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Republic of Guinea were unable to send representatives from their capitals to the plenary meeting due to the ongoing Ebola crisis. The Union welcomes the Kimberley Process's ongoing efforts to provide support and technical assistance in addressing the needs of those countries and all diamond-mining communities affected by Ebola.

In 2014, the international community has demonstrated its determination to act collectively and constructively through the Kimberley Process as a valuable instrument in preventing diamonds from fuelling conflicts and, ultimately, in contributing to economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. In that context, the Union welcomes the framework for implementation of the Washington Declaration on Integrating Development of Artisanal and Small Scale Diamond Mining with Kimberley Process Implementation, and looks forward to working closely in support of Angola's efforts as future Chair of the Kimberley Process and Chair of the Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production.

In looking ahead, the European Union welcomes the decision taken at the twelfth Kimberley Process Meeting, held in Guangzhou, to continue dialogue on decision-making and the definition of conflict diamonds. The European Union welcomes the fact that in recent years the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has succeeded in assisting Governments in responding to new situations of conflict and violence. We strongly support the efforts of the Process to evolve and adapt to meet future challenges in the global diamond supply chain and to provide assurance for consumers that diamonds are not tainted by violence.

Before I conclude, please allow me to stress that one of the unique features of the Process is its tripartite structure. Both industry and civil society are essential elements of the Kimberley Process, and have contributed much to its establishment and operation. In that respect, the European Union calls on all participants and observers to recognize the full diversity of opinions within the Process, and to continue working together to further enhance the Scheme's credibility. In particular, we rely on a close working relationship with all of our partners in the civil society coalition to ensure that the Process remains an effective tool for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, to monitor the efficacy of the Kimberley Process in diamond-mining communities across the globe and to continue to challenge us to do more and do better. We will continue to rely on that relationship to ensure that the Process remains an effective tool in future. Last but not least, the European Union encourages Kimberley Process participants and observers to uphold the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

I already had a chance to express our gratitude to the People's Republic of China for its stewardship of

the Process this year. We now warmly welcome Angola as the incoming Chair, and welcome Angola's vision as Chair for 2015 to further strengthen the Kimberley Process by ensuring that the trade in rough diamonds is used for the benefit of all people. We welcome and support the commitments Angola has made for its chairmanship, including commitments to strengthen dialogue with civil society and to promote respect for human rights. We look forward to working closely with Angola to bring renewed impetus and strength to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Mr. Roet (Israel): Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the People's Republic of China for its chairmanship and able stewardship of the Kimberley Process in 2014, including the important contribution it made to curb the trade in conflict diamonds.

This year has seen many achievements, including the strengthening of the implementation of the peer review system, the enhanced transparency and accuracy of statistics and the increased involvement by Governments, industry and civil society in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. I would also like to extend Israel's welcome to the incoming Chair, Angola. We look forward to engaging closely in the coming year.

Diamonds are formed in a particular context of chemical compounds and minerals, heated and crystallized over many years. Conflict diamonds are also created in a specific context — that of poverty, oppression and violence. For decades, conflict diamonds were used as a tool of warfare and a source of cash flows for warlords. Just 14 years ago, diamonds obtained under the most terrible human conditions were being used to fund civil wars. From Angola to Liberia and from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sierra Leone, blood diamonds undermined legitimate Governments and led to the enslavement and death of millions of innocent men, women, and children.

Diamonds may be a luxury for millions of people around the world, but we — the international community — do not have the luxury of ignoring gross human rights violations. Eleven years ago, an alliance of Governments, industry and civil society members united to address the crisis. The Kimberley Process was born out of a recognition of the fact that the mining, refining and merchandising of diamonds needed responsible oversight. The idea was to create a process as transparent as the diamonds being certified. It would

assure buyers that the diamonds they purchased were free from violence and human rights abuses. Thanks to a global commitment matched by global action, 99 per cent of diamonds sold today are certified as conflict-free. That dramatic accomplishment proves that nations can do well by doing good. Consider the following— if we had this success in the mining industry, it means that we can replicate our success in the oil, energy, coffee and other natural resource industries.

As the world's leading exporter of diamonds and the third-largest trading centre for diamonds, Israel was one of the first countries to raise awareness about conflict diamonds, one of the first countries to play a part in establishing the Kimberley Process and the first country to issue a certificate when the Kimberley Process went into effect, in 2003. Today, we are just as committed to ensuring that each and every diamond is certified as conflict-free throughout its entire life cycle — from the mine to the display case.

Israel would like to warmly congratulate Côte d'Ivoire for implementing the requirements of the Security Council resolutions and for moving towards an early resumption of the international trade of its rough diamonds. We will continue to follow Côte d'Ivoire's success as it implements its plan of action and creates the necessary conditions for a significant export of Ivorian rough diamonds.

Israel would also like to acknowledge the progress made by the Central African Republic in addressing issues of non-compliance with the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme requirements. We strongly encourage further cooperation with the African Union and the relevant United Nations bodies as the Central African Republic strengthens its internal control system.

Israel also reaffirms the importance of the tripartite nature of the Kimberley Process. Civil society must be fully involved in the Kimberley Process, particularly in monitoring implementation on the ground. The Kimberley Process must also enhance collaboration with diamond industry associations, international organizations and enforcement agencies. All of those stakeholders benefit from exchanging information. Millions of people, from small-scale miners to heavy equipment operators, and from cutters to polishers, rely on the diamond trade for their livelihoods. When managed and traded responsibly, legally mined diamonds can accelerate development and improve

living standards for millions of people. We all therefore have a duty. We have a duty to the miners who depend on diamonds for their livelihoods. We have a duty to the nations blessed with natural resources to demonstrate that prosperity can replace poverty. And we have a duty to future generations to ensure that cooperation triumphs over conflict.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on its successful chairing of the Kimberley Process in 2014, and to express our appreciation to the Chinese delegation for preparing today's draft resolution on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict (A/69/L.39), which we support and of which we are a sponsor. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish the Republic of Angola every success as it takes over the chairmanship of the Process for 2015.

The Russian Federation has been an active participant in the Kimberley Process since 2000. We value its activities and commend its dynamic development and growth as an international authority in its work as an effective instrument for collectively preventing conflict diamonds from penetrating the market. We believe in strengthening national systems for internal control of the diamond and rough diamond trade. We support increasing other countries' involvement in the Process. We value the efforts of the Kimberley Process to carry out the tasks outlined for it in Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We would like to urge that their effective implementation requires further development of the Process's legal basis. We note the timeliness of the work of revising the global certification system for rough diamonds and the Kimberley Process's development of standards based on development requirements, which include new administrative decisions within the framework of the Kimberley Process committees and the formulation of timely decisions based on the current situation of diamonds in the mining sector.

We support the strengthening of internal controls over the mining of rough diamonds and over production, cutting and trading centres, as well as increasing the transparency of the Kimberley Process's statistics and providing access to those statistics to all interested international bodies. We emphasize the unacceptability of politicizing the Process, making major changes to its structure and working principles, including involving it in any kind of issue that goes beyond the scope of

its mandate. Any distortion of its process or departure from the principle of consensus in taking decisions is also unacceptable. We think it is counterproductive to include questions about the competence of the Kimberley Process in other international forums such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Trade Organization and so forth. We firmly believe that we should continue to work to achieve constructive development for conflict diamonds and that it should be done directly within the Kimberley Process, with the emphasis on multilateral contributions from all involved in developing its potential.

We take a positive view of the cooperative activities between United Nations bodies and the Process in the area of the implementation of the requirements of the international Certification Scheme for rough diamonds, and the elimination of the trade in illicit diamonds from areas of conflict. For its part, the Russian Federation has scrupulously and fully complied with all the requirements of the Process's Certification Scheme for rough diamonds, which was confirmed by the Kimberley Process's review visit to our country in 2013.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): I would like to thank the President for convening this annual briefing and allowing my delegation to contribute to the topic under discussion. We welcome the report (A/69/622, annex) of the 2014 Chair of the Kimberley Process, and wish to express our satisfaction with the excellent manner in which China carried out its stewardship. We are very grateful for the hospitality provided by China both during the intersessionals and the plenary, as well as for its leadership role during the process.

As a founding member of the Kimberley Process and a consummate dependent on the sparkling stones we call diamonds, Botswana places a very high premium on the legitimate exploitation, sale and trade of rough diamonds. A blessing to our nation and a precious natural commodity, diamonds have played an important role in transforming the lives of our communities, bringing food to the table, sending young people to school, providing free health care for all and building infrastructure. For that reason, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the integrity of the diamond industry and preserving its wealth for posterity. Informed by our long-term national interests and an overall strategic vision for harnessing our natural capital, we are committed to doing good with diamonds while using the industry to invest in our people. To that

end, we will continue to work with the international community and with stakeholders — while putting the welfare of our people first — to curb the illicit flow of rough diamonds. Simply put, we will continue to do good with diamonds, because diamonds are for development. We recognize, however, that in many parts of the world so-called conflict diamonds have been used to fuel conflict, while undermining the rule of law and disrupting governance. We stand ready to share lessons, experiences and best practices with those producers and manufacturers willing to do so.

We wish to reiterate our strong support and faith in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and in the Kimberley Process as an important framework between Governments, the industry and civil society for promoting the integrity of the industry while finding ways to avoid conflict. Over the years, we have had excellent relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation with key actors in the Process, especially from civil society and industry. We are committed to continuing that strategic partnership and working together for the good of humankind. We are very proud of the Kimberley Process mechanism and believe that it has been instrumental in shaping Security Council measures aimed at combating the illicit trade in rough diamonds.

We welcome the 2014 report, which we believe clearly illustrates the progress made so far while underlining the urgent need for reforming and strengthening the Kimberley Process. We believe that is the only way that the Process can respond effectively to today's existing and emerging challenges.

As we move forward, we wish to welcome and engage potential participants that wish to be a part of the Kimberley Process family. As a result of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), of 29 April, we are delighted to welcome back Côte d'Ivoire. We look forward to seeing that great country resume the sale and trade of diamonds as mandated by the Certification Scheme. We were encouraged by the resilience of the Ivorian people during the sanctions period and are happy to see them back on their feet. To that end, we look forward to seeing them implement their post-sanctions strategy.

On the other hand, we continue to be deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in the Central African Republic. We are worried that the prolonged conflict, as well as the instability and insecurity

inflicted by the militias, has already had a negative impact on the socioeconomic life of the country's citizens. We are aware that thousands of women and children remain displaced in the affected areas, while access to schools and health care is a challenge. We know that the Central African Republic's leadership has every intention of seeing this conflict end so that the people can resume their normal lives, including selling diamonds. We appreciate the openness and candour with which the Government engages the Kimberley Process as a whole, and we wish it the best as it tries to strengthen its internal controls. For our part, we will do whatever we can within the Process to help bring normalcy to the Central African Republic.

Finally, we wish to congratulate Angola, the incoming Chair for 2015, with which we look forward to working as we carry the Kimberley Process forward.

Ms. Hamilton (United States of America): We thank China for chairing the Kimberley Process during 2014 and applaud Angola for its assumption of the Chair as of 1 January 2015. Angola has set out an ambitious agenda for its chairmanship during 2015, including, as it has said, leading the transformation of industrial and artisanal diamond mining and marketing in a venture of peace and prosperity and respect for human rights, communities and peoples for the benefit of nations.

The United States strongly supports the work of the Kimberley Process. We believe it plays an important and necessary role in ensuring that diamonds do not contribute to conflict. The United States looks forward to working with Angola and other Kimberley Process participants and observers in promoting greater cooperation within the organization, including civil society and industry, as represented by the World Diamond Council, together with the World Customs Organization and other international organizations. We also look forward to broadening the definition of conflict diamonds in order to address potential problems and ensure consumer confidence in the world's diamond supply.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 31.

A number of representatives have asked for the floor in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention

and to 5 minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Nitzan (Israel): Every year we are forced to listen to the Palestinian observer's lectures. Every year I know that those lectures have two unmistakable qualities: they are long and they are wrong. Amid the tired accusations, one resounding message emerges: the Palestinian leadership is never at fault. The Palestinian leadership has demonstrated no self-criticism, no responsibility, no accountability — a Palestinian culture of impunity. Listening to the Palestinian observer, one would believe that the Palestinian leadership has no responsibility for the well-being of their people or for the strength of their economy.

While the Palestinians are busy condemning, criticizing and bashing Israel at the United Nations, Israel is busy supporting the Palestinian economy and developing their infrastructure. Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the United Nations together agreed on a tripartite mechanism for the reconstruction of Gaza. I regret that, yesterday, the Palestinian observer could not share some of his views on that important mechanism. Israel is abiding by its commitments to the mechanism, but the PA is dragging its feet, as reflected just yesterday in the statement made by Special Coordinator Robert Serry.

The truth is that the reconstruction of Gaza is not high on the agenda of President Abbas or the PA. Consider the following. In view of all that Abbas has said about his commitment to Gaza, he has not even set foot in the Gaza Strip — especially not in the past three months, after the recent operations and in-fighting in Gaza. He is far too consumed by dreaming up new ways to blame Israel, including by coming to the United Nations.

Despite the obstacles erected by the Palestinian Authority, thousands of tons of cement and construction materials have been made available by Israel for construction projects. Additionally, Israel has ensured that food and goods continue to flow uninterrupted into the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians monopolize the time of this body to complain about their financial troubles. A closer look at the budgetary priorities of the PA would prove that is another example of trying to deflect responsibility. Every year, 4 per cent of the PA budget is used to pay salaries to terrorists in Israeli prisons. That amounts to \$130 million. The Palestinian Authority's message

to its people could not be clearer: the more you slay, the more we pay. They are far more interested in funding terrorists than in investing in social services. Instead of funding terrorism and terrorists, perhaps the Palestinian Authority could turn its attention to repaying its \$430 million debt to the Israeli electric company. Despite that growing debt, Israel is continuing to build four substations to improve the scope and quality of electricity provision to the Palestinians.

In recent years, countless scandals involving corrupt senior Palestinian Authority and Fatah officials have been exposed. For example, last year a report by the European Court of Auditors revealed that European aid amounting to €2 billion had been lost to corruption and spending abuses. Will anyone question the Palestinian Authority on that gross abuse? Will anyone question the Palestinian observer here on such abuse? According to Palestinian polls, 78 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza think that the Palestinian Authority is corrupt. The sample found that 64 per cent of Palestinians think that Hamas is corrupt.

The Palestinian Authority is able to deflect responsibility because the international community is granting the Palestinian leadership impunity. It is time for the Palestinian Authority to assume responsibility. It must stop blaming Israel and start being accountable.

Israel is fully committed to a two-States-for-two-peoples solution, through direct negotiations between the Israeli and the Palestinian sides. That is the only way to achieve a sustainable and lasting solution to our conflict.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We asked for the floor in exercise of the right of reply in connection with the fact that the statement made by the representative of Ukraine included certain political assessments, in particular regarding the convoys of humanitarian assistance that Russia has been sending to Donbas. The word “illegal” was used in that connection. We would like to recall that from the very outset Russia has stated its openness to dialogue and cooperation with the Ukrainian side concerning the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those among the population who are suffering.

The Russian side has always informed the Ukrainian authorities of the convoys’ destination and called upon Ukrainian customs officials to conduct their inspections. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has noted, Ukrainian personnel

are represented at the checkpoints. In fact, the two most recent convoys were inspected by Ukrainian customs and border officials, who found nothing unlawful contained within, except for humanitarian supplies.

We hope that in future the Ukrainian side and the International Committee of the Red Cross will be better prepared to assist Russia in supplying humanitarian assistance to Donbas.

Ms. Alsaleh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have requested the floor in order to exercise my right of reply to the statement delivered today by the representative of Turkey.

In reference to the statement made by the representative of Syria, the Turkish representative noted that the Syrian statement consisted purely of baseless allegations. Before replying, I wish to recall the words of the Syrian representative in reference to Turkey. First, he recalled that for months the Turkish Government had refused to allow humanitarian convoys travelling to Syria to cross the Nusaybin border crossing. I do not know why the representative of Turkey claimed it was a baseless allegation, given that it was one of the main impediments to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), in terms of access for humanitarian assistance crossing the border.

The second point contained in the Syrian representative’s statement in reference to Turkey is that terrorists are being trained in special camps on Turkish territory. That is true. It is well known and recognized by many international officials. Even United States intelligence officials have recognized that terrorists are being trained in Turkey.

In that context I wish to state that my country agrees with Turkey on one point noted by the Turkish representative, namely, that Turkey’s action vis-à-vis the Syrian people is clear. In fact, Turkey’s action is clear, obvious and undisputed. For example, there are currently 14,000 terrorist fighters in Syria from the Caucasus, Chechnya and various other nationalities, who entered Syria by one of two ways: either by the northern border between Turkey and Syria, or by falling from space, with the help of the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration — or they came from Mars.

According to hundreds of international news and other reports, including from the West and even from Turkey, illegitimate practices by the ruling Turkish

Justice and Development Party, supported by the regime, have left the borders wide open for terrorists to enter Syria. That stance is well known, even by Turkish officials themselves.

In that context, I refer to a recent report published by Global Research, a Canadian research centre. It documents that Turkey is protecting Daesh combatants and providing them with all the necessities, including supply lines. The report also states that Daesh is not only financed by the sale of oil stolen from Syria, but also by ransom payments for hostages. Those funds pay for supplies and convoys to pass across the Turkish border every day.

For over three years, Turkey has daily allowed floods of provisions, fighters and heavy weaponry to

cross the Turkish border to supply Daesh in Syria. As recently as June, Turkish customs officials allowed 47 tons of terrorist weapons to pass into northern Syria. Even a Turkish report confirms that some Daesh fighters connected to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had been arrested and held in Turkish prisons, among whom were leaders of Daesh.

I would like to urge the Turkish representative to work in the interests of the friendly Turkish people, who are genuinely opposed to the aggressive regional policies of the Government, and to urge the Government to promote peace and security in the region, instead of spreading chaos and terrorism.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.