



# General Assembly

Seventy-first session

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Thomson . . . . . (Fiji)

*Ms. Young (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 14 (continued)

### Culture of peace

#### Draft resolution (A/71/L.43)

**The Acting President:** Members will recall that the General Assembly considered agenda item 14 at its 63rd plenary meeting, on 15 December 2016.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.43.

**Mr. Munir (Pakistan):** It is my great pleasure and honour to join the Mission of the Philippines in introducing the draft resolution entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, contained in document A/71/L.43. I thank all Member States that took active part in the negotiations on the draft this year and enriched this content with their constructive suggestions. We appreciate the leading role of UNESCO and the valuable contribution of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue at the national, regional and international levels.

First introduced in 2004, the resolution on promotion of interreligious dialogue is based on our shared belief that greater understanding of and respect for diversity are the best way of achieving global peace. The world today is afflicted with destructive conflicts, both old

and new, which are fuelled by lingering suspicions and mistrust across religious and civilizational fault lines. These conflicts not only cause immense human suffering and economic loss, but also obstruct friendly interaction and socioeconomic cooperation among the various regions and nations of the world.

We also witness a growing trend of xenophobia and religious intolerance and the emergence of new extremist ideologies in different parts of the world. Much of the growing mistrust can be traced to a growing gap in understanding and a lack of tolerance among the various religions and civilizations. Extremist and terrorist groups exploit this gap to propagate their own toxic agenda. It is therefore imperative for all of us to strengthen mechanisms and actions for the promotion of dialogue and understanding among all religions and civilizations with a view to restoring harmony and strengthening cooperation for peace and development.

Despite differences, religions and cultures have a lot of commonality that can actually unite us. We need to build on these shared values. Cultural diversity can be converted into a positive force for promoting cooperation, socioeconomic development and harmony. The draft resolution is also in sync with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes among its goals the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. For this to happen, we will have to join hands to eliminate prejudices, biases and stereotypes and engage in a genuine and constructive dialogue at all levels across the cultural and religious divide. Dialogue should be pursued in a structured, multilayered and all-inclusive format. It should include

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religious and community leaders, civil society and academic institutions. The ultimate objective of dialogue should be to prevent conflict and promote peace and harmony through better understanding, moderation and a global culture of peace.

It is our belief that, with enhanced dialogue and better understanding, it is possible to achieve the objective of a diverse, yet harmonious and peaceful world, standing firmly on the pillars of peaceful coexistence and unity in diversity. We hope that the Assembly will once again lend its unanimous support to the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/71/L.43.

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

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.43, in addition to those delegations listed on the draft document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Austria, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chile, China, Eritrea, Guatemala, Italy, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mongolia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Qatar, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I would also like to announce that the Republic of Korea is not a sponsor of the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.43, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

A separate recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/71/L.43. Is there any objection to that request?

The representative of Pakistan has requested the floor. I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Munir** (Pakistan): We object to the request for a separate vote on operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/71/L.43, in accordance with rule 89 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with rule 89, which I will read:

"If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against."

Do any members wish to speak on the request for division?

I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

**Mr. Samvelian** (Armenia): Armenia requested a recorded vote on operative paragraph 9 and, in order to flag its objection to that paragraph, we will insist on taking action to put operative paragraph 9 to the vote.

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

**Mr. Munir** (Pakistan): For over a decade, the Philippines and Pakistan have championed the resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. One of the pillars of the resolution is the role of the United Nations Alliance for Civilizations in promoting greater understanding and respect for civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs. It is therefore unfortunate that a request for deletion has been made on operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/71/L.43, which relates to the Seventh Global Forum of the Alliance. I wish to invite the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the event was a United Nations event, so the call for deletion and vote on operative paragraph 9 would be against what was achieved at the conference itself. I would like to inform the Assembly that we would therefore call on all Member States to vote against the separation of operative paragraph 9.

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

**Mrs. Natividad** (Philippines): The Philippines regrets that the motion for division has been put forward under rule 89 in reference to operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/71/L.43.

Operative paragraph 9 welcomes the Baku Declaration, adopted at the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in April. The Baku Declaration, among other things, promotes a culture of peace through interreligious and intercultural dialogue — the very essence of draft resolution A/71/L.43, before us today.

Paragraph 7 of the Baku Declaration stresses “the importance of respect and understanding for cultural and religious diversity”. It encourages activities that promote tolerance, respect dialogue and cooperation for promoting a culture of peace and non-violence at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. This draft resolution has been adopted by consensus in past sessions because of a shared belief in and a commitment to the value of dialogue to foster greater understanding and tolerance of our cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversities.

Just as we welcomed the Vienna Declaration from the fifth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2013 and the Bali Declaration from the sixth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2014, so must we welcome the Baku Declaration issued at the Alliance’s Seventh Global Forum this year. These Declarations encourage the implementation of activities that contribute to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue for peace. We must sustain and promote the momentum created by this Declaration, especially in the midst of the conflicts and violence we witness every day.

The forums of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, a United Nations event, brings together Heads of State and Government, Ministers and ranking officials from 119 Member States, together with many partner organizations, who make up the Group of Friends of the Alliance, who will work together towards a more peaceful and more socially inclusive world by building mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious identities.

We have endeavoured to accommodate the views, concerns, contributions, suggestions and input expressed by many delegations in the consultations, conducted in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. Let us therefore welcome all efforts and undertakings that would contribute to our common goals and aspirations for achieving and sustaining peace, including the Baku Declaration referred to in operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with rule 89, I shall now put to the vote the motion for division.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Armenia

*Against:*

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

*Abstaining:*

France, Mauritius, Nigeria, Palau

*The motion to divide the draft resolution was rejected by 116 against, 1 in favour and 4 abstentions.*

**The Acting President:** We shall now turn to the draft resolution as a whole.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.43 as a whole?

*Draft resolution A/71/L.43, as a whole, was adopted (resolution 71/249).*

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kuwait informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

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

**Mr. Samvelian** (Armenia): Armenia recognizes and fully understands the importance of resolution 71/249, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, and commends the efforts of its main sponsors. It strongly believes that such a dialogue would enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity at the global, regional, national and local levels and foster an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding. We are of the view that interreligious and intercultural dialogue should be aimed at promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and we strongly condemn xenophobia, racism and discrimination in all its forms and manifestations.

Armenia entered the negotiations on the resolution in good faith and with a cooperative spirit. We spared no effort to achieve genuine consensus. However, the negotiations fell short of sharing similar objectives due to uncompromising points of view. From the very beginning of informal consultations, Armenia repeatedly expressed its reservations on operative paragraph 9, in particular concerning the host country of the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

Armenia has consistently alerted the drafters about the ongoing hatred for Armenians and the Government-sponsored Armeniaphobia in Azerbaijan, which culminated in the large-scale aggression against the people of Nagorno Karabakh unleashed by Azerbaijan at the beginning of April, just a few weeks prior to the opening of the Forum of the Alliance in Baku. The highest authority of Azerbaijan used the Forum itself as a platform for disseminating anti-Armenia propaganda, xenophobia and hatred. The actions and policies of Azerbaijan are in blatant breach of the purposes of the Alliance and of this very resolution.

Regrettably, efforts to reach a consensus on the resolution failed. Given those circumstances, Armenia requested the recorded vote on operative paragraph 9 of the resolution, and should the vote have taken place, Armenia would have voted against it. Armenia also disassociates itself from the resolution.

**Mr. Dolbow** (United States of America): The United States strongly believes in encouraging a culture of peace through the promotion of justice, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as by rejecting violence and addressing the root causes of conflict. We are encouraged by consensus-based

efforts to promote tolerance, dialogue, reconciliation and respect for cultural diversity.

As a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious nation, we also believe that dialogue, understanding and cooperation among and between individuals of diverse backgrounds are important to the development of peaceful and harmonious relations among all people and nations. The United States understands that terrorism and violent extremism have no basis in religion. Indeed, we believe that religious organizations and interreligious dialogue that promote a culture of peace represent elements essential to preventing violent extremism.

It is therefore unfortunate that resolution 71/249 does not take advantage of the opportunities presented by the recommendations of the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Member States endorsed the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in paragraph 40 of resolution 70/291, when they recommended that Member States consider implementing those recommendations. Over the past 10 years, Member States have called for better balance among all the pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the recommendations and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism are a practical framework to implement the first pillar, which addresses the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Recognizing the links with issues addressed in the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism would have better enabled Member States and the United Nations to take advantage of the investments that are being made to implement the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Separately, we understand that China has organized some activities under the umbrella of the Belt and Road Initiative, which, it says, can help to promote people-to-people ties. As we have previously stated, all of our available information suggests that that initiative is primarily an economic strategy focused on expanding China’s infrastructure investment. If the Belt and Road Initiative has broader ambitions to “strengthen people-to-people bonds and promote mutual understanding and cooperation”, we encourage China to ensure that that element, including respect for the cultures, needs and desires of recipient countries is incorporated into all projects it develops under the umbrella. As with any initiative of this type, we hope that



China's projects through the Belt and Road initiative, whether economic, cultural or both, align with global standards, China's human rights commitments and the needs of recipient countries.

Finally, we understand that this resolution reaffirms the international community's recognition that article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in its entirety, provides the international framework for the protection of freedom of expression. The United States reaffirms its well-known position that the exercise of the right to the freedom of expression should be afforded the maximum possible protection and our support for the freedoms for religion and expression, including the respect for the right to freedom of thought, conscience or belief.

In that regard, we are disappointed that paragraph 10 does not distinguish extremism, a term that may be subjectively applied to certain groups and could be used to suppress the exercise of the freedoms of expression and conscience, as well as other human rights and fundamental freedoms, from violent extremism, which we universally oppose. Had the resolution reflected our edits, we believe that human rights would have been better protected and that it would have helped to ensure that Member States actions to counter violent extremism were not counterproductive.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has now concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

#### **Agenda item 126 (continued)**

#### **Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations**

##### **(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

##### **Draft resolution (A/71/L.46)**

**The Acting President:** Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 126 and its sub-items (a) to (z) at its 48th plenary meeting, on 21 November 2016.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.46.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.46, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations

and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons". The Netherlands, which is host country to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), is introducing the draft resolution on behalf of approximately 40 sponsors.

The aim of the biennial resolution is to highlight the importance of continued cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW. The OPCW contributes to international peace and security by verifying the destruction of chemical-weapon stockpiles; by working, through industry inspections, to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons; and by promoting the peaceful use of chemistry for activities not prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention, through international cooperation and assistance, among other things.

At present, the OPCW's member States represent about 98 per cent of the world's population and land mass and 98 per cent of its chemical industry. The OPCW Technical Secretariat, together with States parties, will continue to work to achieve its full universality. Today's draft resolution is an update of resolution 69/14, of 11 November 2014, and reflects factual developments since then.

Although a vote has been requested, it is still our hope that the draft resolution can be adopted unanimously. We firmly believe that the draft before us is factual and represents a balanced reflection of the various views of Member States. We therefore invite delegations to support the draft resolution in a spirit of compromise and cooperation.

**The Acting President:** We will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/71/L.46.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.46, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.46, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons”. A recorded vote has been requested. A separate, recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraph 4. If there is no objection to that request, I shall put operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/71/L.46 to the vote.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam

*Against:*

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

*Operative paragraph 4 was retained by 113 votes to 2, with 19 abstentions.*

[Subsequently, the delegations of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

**The Acting President:** I shall now put to the vote draft resolution A/71/L.46 as a whole.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

None

*Draft resolution A/71/L.46, as a whole, was adopted by 145 votes to none, with no abstentions (resolution 71/250).*

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted, I would like to remind them that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba would like to explain its vote on resolution 71/250, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons”.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we support continued and effective cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The retention of the practice of adopting the resolution by consensus is beneficial to the existing cooperative relationship between the two organizations and will help to restore States’ traditional unity regarding its text and avoid any attempt to provoke confrontation and politicization rather than the spirit of cooperation and support that our Organization brings to the OPCW. It is not productive, in our view, for the resolution to include references to Security Council resolutions or to a particular State. In future we should strive to preserve this resolution’s purpose and nature.

**Mr. Luque Márquez** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador, as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, strongly supports cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with due respect for their different areas of competency and the OPCW’s highly technical nature. For that reason, the delegation of Ecuador voted in favour of resolution 71/250 as a whole. However, we abstained in the voting on the resolution’s paragraph 4 as an expression of our wish that more flexibility had been shown in drafting it, opposing as it did a request by another delegation during the consultations that seemed entirely reasonable to us, and that did not affect the paragraph’s content. Including that flexibility in the draft text would very

likely have ensured that we could have adopted the resolution without having to have a vote.

Ecuador reiterates its regret that contentious wording is now being inserted into draft resolutions that are related to universal instruments and that were traditionally adopted by consensus. Doing so changes procedural resolutions into political resolutions, which does not make it possible to adopt them without having to resort to votes. That is not the way to preserve consensus. It is necessary to return to language that reflects all of our views.

**Mr. Denктаş** (Turkey): Turkey attaches the utmost importance to the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the cooperation between it and the United Nations. The most recent, relevant — and perhaps the most substantial — mechanism for cooperation between the two organizations is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The Mechanism, which was established to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, found that Syrian armed forces were responsible for the use of such weapons in three cases; Da’esh was found to be responsible for their use in one case. The third (S/2013/774, annex) and fourth (S/2014/52, annex) reports of the Mechanism include detailed descriptions of how these attacks were perpetrated.

At the informal consultations on resolution 71/250, we demanded that a brief description of the mandate of the Mechanism and a reference to the aforementioned third and fourth reports be added to the text. The resolution includes no such description or reference. In our view, therefore, it does not adequately or accurately reflect the facts on the ground. Nevertheless, we voted in favour both on paragraph 4 and on the resolution as a whole, as a reflection of the importance we attach to United Nations-OPCW cooperation. However, at this stage, we wish to put on record our expectation of a more satisfactory text next time. We also wish to reiterate our expectation that those responsible for these crimes be held accountable.

**Mr. Sergeev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Despite the fact that Security Council resolution 2209 (2015) was adopted by consensus, we do not consider the reference to it in resolution 71/250 to be entirely appropriate. Unlike resolution 2235 (2015), resolution 2209 (2015) is not directly

related to cooperation between the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations. Moreover, far from being limited to only the topic of Syria, cooperation between the two international organizations is multifaceted in nature. The reference in paragraph 3 to the Joint Investigative Mechanism renders the inclusion of paragraph 4 unnecessary, as some States — due to their geopolitical interests — might wish to politicize everything linked to Syria. The chemical demilitarization process in Syria has been successfully concluded as a result of the political will of Damascus and the support of the entire international community. Conspiracy theories in that regard are out of place.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Syrian Arab Republic is a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and has been a consistent participant in its meetings and debates. Since acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), we have complied regularly with the conditions of accession and immediately implemented the decisions of the Executive Council. We have also cooperated constructively in every possible manner with the OPCW and United Nations experts, garnering the praise of both organizations and international public opinion.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns any use of weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons, whenever and wherever it takes place. We are of the view that such use is unacceptable, immoral and reprehensible. For that reason, we have ceaselessly sought to establish a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. In a demonstration of our commitment to that goal, we denounced the use of chemical weapons and adhered to the CWC. During our time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2003, we also submitted a draft resolution to establish a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. The draft, however, was met with a veto from a permanent member of the Security Council in order to protect the weapons of mass destruction and the nuclear weapons held by Israel.

The text of resolution 71/250 is of a purely routine, technical and procedural nature and has always enjoyed consensus. However, the decision of some States to politicize the text since 2014 means that it is must

now always be put to a vote. We are constantly facing new attempts to politicize standard procedural draft resolutions through the introduction of controversial issues. We would ask the following question: is the goal of those States to adopt a draft resolution by vote instead of by consensus? It is clear that some States are conflating different issues, in particular technical and political ones.

Some States attempt to politicize this resolution in a hysterical manner in order to have it target specific States, focusing in a selective manner on Syria. This is inappropriate because Syria is party to the CWC and the OPCW. This selective policy and these insidious allegations, which target some Middle Eastern States, are a farce. Those who claim to be interested in the security and the stability of the people of the region should prove their credibility by opposing the systematic violations by Israel of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation and other delegations have always striven to achieve a balanced resolution that enjoys consensus support and that reflects the positive trend of seeking to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria, but the authors of this resolution refused to listen to our concerns, instead preferring to politicize the resolution. The authors should have condemned the development, manufacture and use of chemical weapons by armed terrorist groups, especially given that some States are providing unfailing support to such groups to produce such weapons. That is the real threat to the future of humankind.

The draft resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and other international organizations have never referred to any State. Why is the Syrian Arab Republic targeted in this resolution, in particular given Syria's achievement, which was unprecedented in the history of the OPCW and facilitated by the Syrian Government? Those States should have thanked the Syrian Government for its cooperation. We reiterate our request that attempts to politicize this matter cease. We abstained in the voting on paragraph 4 of the resolution for the reasons just expressed.

Regarding the explanation of vote made by the representative of Turkey, it is now well known that Turkey sponsored the transport of sarin gas into its territory, in violation of Security Council resolutions. Nuclear weapons were tested on animals in the Turkish city of Gaziantep. We would ask the representative



of Turkey to deny the veracity of those allegations, particularly since 12 terrorists in possession of sarin gas were arrested in Turkey before being released.

The reports of the technical commissions responsible for combating terrorism should document the complicity of Turkish authorities, which contribute to the transport of chemical weapons into Syria. Everyone knows that Turkey supports terrorist groups by providing them with conventional and non-conventional weapons. In July and August, Turkey facilitated the transfer of 14 tons of toxic substances from that country, including yellow phosphorus. The Turkish Government was involved in several incidents relating to the use of chemical weapons in my country.

**Mr. Robotjazi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): It was our wish that resolution 71/250, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, could have been adopted without a vote. Unfortunately, this was not possible because the sponsors of the resolution did not take on board the views of all concerned delegations in an inclusive manner. Although my delegation supported the resolution as a whole, it abstained in the voting on paragraph 4 because that paragraph takes note of a Security Council document that is not related to the subject matter of the resolution. It is unfortunate that that unacceptable and clearly politically motivated reference was included in the text despite the reservations and objections expressed by some delegations. We urge the sponsors of the resolution to note its technical nature and to refrain from politicizing it.

**Ms. Chan Shum** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to speak in explanation of vote after the voting on resolution 71/250, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Venezuela, as a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), reiterates its strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in any circumstance. That notwithstanding, our delegation decided to abstain in the voting on paragraph 4 because, as our delegation expressed during the adoption on 6 March 2015 of Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), on chemical weapons in Syria, that resolution prejudices the results of the investigation undertaken by the OPCW in

conjunction with the United Nations. Accordingly, we think it is necessary that the investigation be concluded in order to determine who is responsible for the commission of those acts, which would make it possible to determine whether the alleged violations of the CWC were committed.

In addition, we would also like to stress that our delegation commends and fully supports cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW. However, we believe that the full implementation of the provisions of the CWC requires the active participation of all States parties and the cooperation of the relevant international organizations. For those reasons, we voted in favour of the resolution as a whole.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (n) of agenda item 126?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** Two delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind them that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Musayev** (Azerbaijan): First of all, I would like to thank the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines and co-facilitators for their dedicated efforts and skilful steering of the negotiations on resolution 71/249, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. We are also grateful for the strong support of Member States for the outcomes of the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Baku earlier this year.

The Baku Forum, attended by more than 4,000 representatives of 147 countries, including Heads of State and Government, ministers and other high-level officials, as well as representatives of international and civil-society organizations, has definitely achieved its main objective of highlighting the role of the allies of civilizations as a global platform for sharing best practices for living together in inclusive societies and for developing solutions to challenges.

There is nothing surprising in the unsuccessful and senseless attempts of Armenia to challenge the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Azerbaijan, and its outcomes. We

hope that Armenia will draw lessons from the results of the vote on its initiative that has just taken place. In reality, the ideals and principles of the Alliance of Civilizations, such as notions of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the culture of peace, are alien to Armenia. Otherwise, it would not have become a mono-ethnic State by expelling all non-Armenians. Armenia has applied the same policy and practice of creating ethnically cleansed areas to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

According to the representative of Armenia, the April escalation along the front line prevented his country from participating in the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. However, he omitted to add that the April escalation was a direct result of Armenia's policy of aggression against Azerbaijan. In reality, in the early hours of 2 April, the armed forces of Armenia stepped up fighting from their positions in the occupied territories, subjecting the armed forces of Azerbaijan, along the front line and the adjacent densely populated areas under the control of Azerbaijan, to intense fire with heavy artillery and large-calibre weapons.

As a result of Armenia's attacks and subsequent hostilities, 34 towns and villages along the front line were shelled, causing casualties among civilians and the servicemen of the armed forces of Azerbaijan, as well as either destroying or substantially damaging private and public property, including residences, schools and kindergartens. The actions of Armenia and the statement made by the delegation of that country once again demonstrated that instead of being a partner in peace, it has chosen the path of war.

**Mr. Samvelian** (Armenia): It was not my intention to exercise the right of reply, but the representative of Azerbaijan has given me no other choice. To ensure that I remain on topic, I shall just read out the statement made by the Armenian Foreign Ministry in relation to the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations on 20 April.

"In the early hours of 2 April, Azerbaijan unleashed a large-scale offensive operation against Nagorno Karabakh, thus violating the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreements and the 1995 ceasefire consolidation signed by Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, which do not have time limits. Azerbaijan has violated the basic principles of international law, the decision

and declaration adopted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit and ministerial councils, blatantly disregarding the statements of the President of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs countries, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and France on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution.

"From the very beginning, civilian infrastructure and civilian population, including children and the elderly, became Azerbaijan's intentional and indiscriminate targets. Among the first civilian victims was a 12-year-old boy who was killed in front of the school building following a grave missile attack, and two other schoolchildren were wounded. In one Karabakh village, three elderly people, including a 92-year-old woman, were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed. In addition, three captured soldiers from the Nagorno Karabakh armed forces were beheaded Islamic State-style by Azerbaijani forces, an event that was subsequently celebrated in towns and villages and publicized on social networks. Furthermore, during an exchange between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan of the bodies of the deceased, carried out through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of the Personal Representative of the Chairman in Office of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, it was noted that the bodies transferred from the Azerbaijani side showed evidence of severe torture and mutilation.

"Those barbaric acts committed by Azerbaijan, which go beyond the basic norms of civilized behaviour, are violations of core international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other documents, including the 1949 and 1977 Geneva Conventions. Azerbaijan continues to demonstrate its total disregard of international human rights and humanitarian law. The persistent violations of human rights inside Azerbaijan include its attacks on and imprisonment of representatives of civil society, the media and human rights defenders. Along with its regular efforts to sow intolerance and hatred against Armenia, it provides a breeding ground for the Azerbaijani regime's criminal military adventurists.

“As participants were gathering to attend the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Azerbaijan’s armed forces continued to violate the ceasefire, resulting in more loss of life. Since the Azerbaijani aggression began, it has resulted in death and injury for hundreds, including civilians. It shows the absurdity of celebrating a more peaceful and socially inclusive world and building mutual respect among peoples of different cultures and religious identities, in a country that has engaged in barbarity and murder only a few hundred metres from the Forum’s venue. It is an affront to the image and integrity of the Alliance. In the circumstances, the convening in Azerbaijan — a country that grossly violates the very aims, principles and values of the Alliance of Civilizations — of the Forum should have been cancelled. Armenia remains a friend of the Alliance and committed to its purposes. However, given the circumstances, Armenia did not join in the consensus on the Declaration of the Seventh Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, and in the absence of a consensus, the Declaration cannot be adopted. Armenia rejects the Forum held in Baku in its entirety, including its outcome.”

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

**Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan):** The remarks we just heard from the representative of Armenia are full of falsifications, distortions and misinterpretations, and demonstrate how far Armenia is from engaging in a constructive quest for peace in our region. In reality, Armenia was preparing for an offensive long before April of this year, and was doing groundwork aimed at covering up its provocative actions. There is a great deal of evidence testifying to those preparations that we will readily share with all interested delegations.

The allegations that, during the escalation in April, Azerbaijan targeted civilians and civilian settlements are groundless and represent yet another attempt to divert the international community’s attention from the atrocities and other war crimes committed by the armed forces of Armenia during the conflict. As is well known, on 10 April the International Committee of the Red Cross facilitated a handover between the sides of the bodies of those killed in action following the escalation. A medical examination performed thereafter

noted numerous signs of post-mortem mutilation of the bodies of Azerbaijani servicemen.

The comments made by the representative of Armenia about human rights and democracy in Azerbaijan do not stand up to criticism. With a wealth of experience and skill in carrying out bloody reprisals against the peaceful Azerbaijani population during the conflict, on more than one occasion Armenia’s most senior leaders have resorted to the cruellest possible methods of dealing with political opponents in their own country, and more than enough facts exist to prove that. Rather than commenting on human rights in other countries, the Government of Armenia should carry out some degree of self-evaluation, acknowledge the violent methods for suppressing political opponents that have been used in its own country and heed the statements of the relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations expressing serious concern about the spirit of intolerance that prevails in Armenia and its discriminatory policies and practices against ethnic and religious minorities, refugees and asylum-seekers, and women and children.

I am confident that the international community would be more interested in hearing from the delegation of Armenia about the real problems that the country is facing in the socioeconomic area and the significant decline in major sectors of its economy in recent years. In reality, by disregarding the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, continuing to unlawfully occupy Azerbaijan’s territory, deliberately denying the right of more than a million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes, pursuing racist ideologies and misinterpreting fundamental norms and principles of international law, Armenia clearly demonstrates who is actually responsible for undermining regional peace, security and stability.

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

**Mr. Samvelian (Armenia):** I will be brief. Armenia is well prepared for reflection on the meaningless accusation that was just made against it, but for the sake of the efficient conduct today of the General Assembly plenary, which has a completely different purpose, I will limit myself to the statement I made earlier.

*The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.*