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President: Mr. Lajčák (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 11

Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution (A/72/L.5)

The President: I want to start my statement today by acknowledging that sport is not always associated with the United Nations, which is understandable. The things that happen on a tennis court or a running track look very different from what we are doing here. However, there is in fact a strong link between sport and the values and work of the United Nations, and today's meeting gives us an opportunity to reaffirm that link. I want to make three points in that respect.

First, simply put, sport can bring people together. It is founded on universal values that include discipline, fairness and respect for opponents and rules. We may speak different languages or have different customs or viewpoints, but once we step onto a field or court, we are all part of the same system. In that way, sport can be a universal instrument that can promote both peace and unity. The United Nations has used such a tool before, particularly through its peacekeeping missions and country teams. Sport has helped open doors in the communities that the United Nations serves. It has been used to build confidence and trust in post-conflict settings, and it has played an important role in the reintegration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers. Certainly, sport alone cannot stop conflict

or bring about peace, but I believe that a football or a hockey puck is a better peacekeeping tool than a gun. It costs less money. It can build rather than destroy. It brings people together instead of sending them fleeing for their lives, and it invokes enthusiasm, not fear. I am confident that the United Nations will continue to use that tool in its work on the ground.

The second point that I want to make is that the Olympic Games and the United Nations aspire to the same ideal, that is, an ideal based on humanity. It is predicated on the fact that no matter what is going on in State capitals around the world, people will always have a space in which to engage and connect. That space can be the finish line of an Olympic sprint, or a Hall such as this one. Whether as athletes or diplomats, we must use such spaces. We must show that humankind can triumph over politics.

The last point that I want to make relates to youth. Sport can offer young people a platform for empowerment. It can give hope for a brighter future. It can enable young people to build their capacity for strategic thinking, teamwork and leadership, and it can provide a route out of underdevelopment and poverty. Increasingly, the United Nations is working to engage and empower young people all over the world. We must reach out to young people in a way that will resonate with them. Sport offers a major opportunity in that respect. We have already seen some success in mobilizing athletes and sports teams to promote the Sustainable Development Goals. We should work to support and replicate and expand on those examples.

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In conclusion, I want to stress the link between sport and the values and work of the United Nations. It is a link that we should do more to strengthen. That is why we should warmly welcome Olympic gold medallist Ms. Kim Yuna to the General Assembly today, and why we should seek out opportunities to support and use sport as a driver of peace, development and humankind. A major opportunity of this kind will present itself in February, when the XXIII Olympic Winter Games will be hosted in the Republic of Korea. It is more important than ever to reaffirm the ideals of the United Nations and the Olympic Games on the Korean peninsula. We must seize that opportunity. I therefore wish the Republic of Korea every success in hosting the Winter Games and look forward to being in Pyeongchang myself next February to attend the Games.

I call on all countries to participate in the 2018 Winter Olympics. Let us demonstrate once again the power of sport to bring us together and overcome political, cultural and historical divides.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.5.

Mr. Lee Hee-beom (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, it is a great honour and privilege for me to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled “Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”.

In less than 90 days, the entire world will enjoy the most spectacular Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang on the Korean peninsula. The Republic of Korea is ready to welcome the world. We are ready to act as hosts to the Olympic family, the world’s media and spectators from around the world. I am very pleased to report to the General Assembly that we have completed all the preparations for the Games, including the construction of all competition and non-competition venues. We have also finished building new roads, and a high-speed train will be open to the public in December. The Olympic flame arrived in Korea on 1 November and is currently travelling across the country, ready to welcome the world.

As we all know, the General Assembly has made it a tradition to adopt the Olympic Truce draft resolution every two years since the adoption of resolution 48/11, in 1993. It is about reminding everyone and respecting the ancient Olympic tradition in Greece of ceasing

all hostilities during the Games. The draft resolution serves the purpose of ending all conflicts during the Olympic Truce. It begins seven days prior to the opening of the Olympic Games, and concludes on the seventh day after the closing of the Paralympic Games. The Olympic Truce ensures the safe passage of the athletes and all other Olympic-accredited personnel when they travel to and from the Olympic Games. The draft resolution also signifies the Assembly’s strong wish that the Pyeongchang Games will provide a window of opportunity to foster an environment conducive to building and sustaining peace on the Korean peninsula in North-East Asia.

The Olympic Truce is about the promotion of peace through sport. We Koreans still vividly remember the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games — an exemplary case of promoting peace by bringing East and West together. The 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games was another good example in that regard. With strong support from the International Olympic Committee, the delegations of both Koreas walked into the Olympic stadium during the opening ceremony, marching together hand-in-hand under the same flag.

Those two events demonstrated the power of sport, which unites people. It is my strong belief that we should and can continue that tradition. I believe that the Olympic Games represent the best expression of our values translated into action. Since 2004, we have been running our own Olympic Truce programmes so as to emphasize the importance of the Olympic Truce Movement in tandem with the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. For the past 14 years, Gangwon province, which is the regional Government of the host city of Pyeongchang, has welcomed more than 1,900 young students from 83 countries. Through the Pyeongchang Dream Programme, it has provided young participants from developing countries, or countries with no winter season and no winter-sport facilities, with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience and enjoy winter sports. I am very happy to inform the Assembly that two participants in the Dream Programme have become Olympians in Olympic Winter Games. In addition, seven other participants have represented their countries in the Youth Olympic Games. We have also directly engaged more than 6 million students through various school visits and cultural activities since 2014. The online educational component is currently accessible to all young Koreans and will remain open even after the Games in order

to continue to promote peace and the Olympic ideals. Moreover, we have held numerous activities, such as the National Model United Nations Conference and other special programmes, to encourage young people to engage in dialogues on the topics of peace and reconciliation. More than 1 million students from many countries have participated in our peace initiatives, of which we are very proud.

On this occasion, I would like to welcome three Korean high-school students who have participated in our programmes. They are here with us today to represent the young people of Korea and their desire for a peaceful Olympic Games. As International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach has reiterated, no other event brings the entire world together like the Olympic Games. Against that background, during a plenary meeting of the General Assembly in September, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea expressed his commitment to peace on the Korean peninsula and his earnest desire for it (see A/72/PV.11). I would like to take this opportunity to assure Member States once again that we, the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, together with the Korean Government, are committed to ensuring a secure and peaceful Olympic Games so that everyone can feel safe and comfortable throughout their stay.

The Pyeongchang Games will be the first of three consecutive Olympic and Paralympic Games in North-East Asia. Our partners and friends from Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 will also stand before the Assembly to support the draft resolution. We Koreans hope that those three Olympic Games will provide a window of opportunity for promoting peace and economic cooperation in North-East Asia. We hope that our joint action today will lead to a chain reaction for the promotion of peace within the region and beyond. Together we are more powerful than any one of us working alone.

I would like to emphasize that the values of peace and sport go hand in hand with the Olympics. We want to share that message as we aim to open up new horizons for sport. On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea, the host city of Pyeongchang and the Organizing Committee, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting, and to cordially ask that the Assembly support the draft resolution before it today.

The President: Before proceeding further, as mentioned in my letter dated 8 November, I should like to consult members with a view to inviting Ms. Kim Yuna, Olympic gold medallist in figure skating and Goodwill Ambassador for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, to make a statement on this occasion.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite Ms. Kim Yuna to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Kim Yuna, Olympic gold medallist in figure skating and Goodwill Ambassador for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Ms. Kim Yuna: I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly and Member States for giving me this opportunity to address the Assembly this morning on the role of sport and the Olympic ideal in promoting peace.

As a former figure skater, a two-time Olympian and a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, I stand proudly before Member States as Honorary Ambassador for the Pyeongchang 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to share my personal experience in witnessing the power of sport in breaking down the walls of race, region, language and religion all around the world.

One hundred and twenty-three years ago, the father of the modern Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin, said that the Olympic spirit is not the property of any one race or one age. We might want to add today that the Olympic spirit is not the exclusive property of any one nation or region of the world or of any one religion or faith. The Olympic Charter now states that the goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity. I strongly believe that that is the spirit of the Olympic Games and that it represents the potential and the power of sport.

I first experienced the same spirit and power as a 10-year-old child watching the South and North Korean delegations walk into the Olympic stadium together in 2000. Today I hope to witness that power again as the General Assembly adopts draft resolution A/72/L.5.

I firmly believe that the Pyeongchang 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will help to spread the message of peace through one of the few languages that has the power to unite people around the world — the graceful and universal language of sport. Pyeongchang represents perhaps the most sincere effort to cross the frozen border between the South and the North and to foster a peaceful environment. In particular, I am confident that the upcoming Pyeongchang 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will be one of the best possible platforms not only for transmitting that message but also for sharing the Olympic spirit of peace for humankind with the entire world.

I would like to promise to everyone that I will do my best to help Pyeongchang 2018 serve as the model for a successful Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games for all the years to come. In turn, I would like to ask for the continued support of the Assembly to help to build the legacy of Pyeongchang for the benefit of all future Olympic and Paralympic Games and the spirit of world peace. I humbly ask Member States to continue to support the Pyeongchang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and the ideals of the Olympic Truce Movement. I hope to see members again next year in Pyeongchang.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): For the twenty-third time, the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will open in February. The world's attention will be focused on the opening ceremonies and the 15 disciplines of the Pyeongchang Games in the Republic of Korea. For the fifty-second time, the Summer and Winter Games will become symbols of effort, excellence and fair play. For the twelfth time, the General Assembly today is calling for the observance of the Olympic Truce.

Allow me to warmly congratulate our friends from the Republic of Korea delegation for the draft resolution (A/72/L.5) that was just introduced to the General Assembly, which we will adopt by acclamation. The Principality of Monaco is proud to be a co-author of that text, which is an affirmation of our belief that sport and the Olympic ideal can build a peaceful and better world.

The call to respect the Olympic Truce represents more than just a powerful symbol of peace. The titles of the agenda item and of draft resolution are directly inspired by the values that are supported and promoted by the Olympic Movement. That is no coincidence, given

that the Movement brings together the International Olympic Committee, 206 National Olympic Committees, the International Sport Federation, the various Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games and all people who adhere to the values of the Olympic Charter. The Olympic Movement has unique reach.

It seems particularly important today to recall that Olympism and its values, as enshrined in the Olympic Charter, are in line with the principles and ideals that transcend our work in this forum and are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Let us not forget that Olympism is also, and perhaps even first and foremost, a philosophy of life — a balance between the qualities of the body, will and spirit. Humanity, dignity and the rejection of all forms of discrimination are fundamental principles of Olympism.

The United Nations, like the Olympic Movement, has ambitious agendas with universal and converging principles. Our Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognized that sport, because of its cross-cutting nature, can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Olympic Movement is equipped with the Olympic Agenda 2020, which is based on good governance and ethics. Those principles are essential because the Olympic Games are the global showcase of the Olympic ideal. In addition, the promotion of human rights is intrinsic to the Games.

At the ninth forum and fifth assembly of European athletes, held in Monaco in October, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II stated that athletes are at the heart of the Olympic Movement and that their protection is of the utmost importance in the Agenda 2020. Let us acknowledge that the actions of the International Olympic Committee are of even greater significance. The commitment of the Committee, which becomes apparent to the world every two years, is constant and requires all the energy and work of its President, members and all those who adhere to the principles of the Olympic Charter and embody and promote them on a daily basis.

Education, health, inclusion, gender equality, empowerment, tolerance and respect, among other things, are part of the Olympic values that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In February 2018, tens of millions of people will turn their attention to the Republic of Korea, which will mark the opening of a six-year Olympic sequence

in Asia, with subsequent Games to take place in Tokyo in 2020 and Beijing in 2022.

The Olympic flag and the United Nations flag will soon be flown together again at the Pyeongchang site and will complement the Olympic rings and torch, symbols of our common future. We strongly believe in the power of sport and its unique ability to unite. That is why the draft resolution reflects our shared hope that the Games provide an opportunity, as its thirteenth preambular paragraph states, “to foster an atmosphere of peace, development, tolerance and understanding on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia”. We look forward to the series of athletic achievements broadcast by the Olympic Channel, which will send a strong positive message. In our day-to-day life, where mistrust sometimes takes precedence over seeking mutual understanding, sport is a powerful language and promotes respect for the rules that apply to everyone equally.

Having come through their qualifying events, the athletes will soon compete under the motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger”. They will thrill and inspire us with their self-denial, efforts, perseverance and the humility that they show in the long and difficult journey that leads them to the Games. Qualifying for the Games represents the culmination of years of sacrifice. It also means undergoing a transformation from being merely an athlete into an Olympian, with the corresponding responsibilities. Being an Olympian means that one’s duties go beyond just giving one’s best. The Olympians will be the focus of rapt attention from their countries and communities, and their actions and gestures will be open to all and analysed.

Like Olympians, we owe it to ourselves to inspire the young people we invoke so often in our speeches and deliberations on peace, conflict prevention, respect for human rights and the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. We must ensure that the Olympic Truce is respected. Let us ensure that the efforts of the Games will be an appropriate expression of our hopes and that they will blur our differences. Let us embrace the Olympic values together and let the youth of the world help us build a future of peace and brotherhood.

Like the athletes who are the ambassadors of Olympism, we bear a significant responsibility, entrusted as we are with the task of representing our States in the United Nations. The Olympic spirit should

therefore enliven us in our every action at the service of our States and multilateralism.

By making the motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger” our own, we can give ourselves the means to achieve the Goals that our Heads of State and Government adopted in the 2030 Agenda faster. We will aim higher in our cooperation efforts. We will be stronger together and truly united for a better world for all of humankind. I hope that the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Pyeongchang will be remembered as the Games of understanding and friendship between peoples who are united by the power of sport.

Ms. Velichko (Belarus): (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus welcomes draft resolution A/72/L.5, of which Belarus is a sponsor, on building a peaceful and better world through sport. One of its key elements is a call to Member States to observe the Olympic Truce under the Charter of the United Nations. We hope that the draft resolution will serve not only as a reminder of the wonderful ancient Greek tradition of ceasing hostilities during the Olympic Games, but also as a call to action for all States.

We hope that in the current context of international instability, the upcoming Olympic Games will facilitate the promotion of the value of peace, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter. We support the efforts of the International Olympic Committee and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate the participation of teams of refugees in the Games. The development of physical capability through sport is a key area of Belarus’s national policy.

Belarus is proud that it has earned the right to host an important European competition in 2019, the second European Games. We firmly condemn any attempt to exploit sport for political gains. We advocate for the preservation of the independence and autonomy of sport, as well as the principle of equality before the law and the preservation of the values and ethics of sport. We are confident that the draft resolution to be adopted today will help strengthen the role of sport in promoting peace and development, strengthening the principles of tolerance and respect and enhancing mutual understanding among States and peoples in the spirit of true Olympism based on friendship, solidarity and fair play without discrimination.

Mr. Alduwaisan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country is pleased to be participating in the

deliberations on this agenda item, as we firmly believe in the importance of sport in solidly grounding societies and relations among peoples and of educating our youth well in that area. We also reaffirm our support for resolution 67/296, adopted in August 2013, in accordance with which Member States, the United Nations system, relevant international organizations, civil society and the public and private sector should cooperate, observe and raise awareness of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. We therefore reiterate the need to invest in our young people, so as to build a better society through programmes and plans of action aimed at helping them to embrace noble principles and at combating crime, extremism and corruption. Those ambitions cannot be realized unless we use the institutions that have been developed within our societies.

The language of sport and athletes has always been one of peace, security and solidarity in confronting violence and extremism. In the case of two of the fiercest military adversaries in the First World War, soccer brought together soldiers from both sides for a day. The results that we could achieve in times of peace through the same means are limited only by our imagination. Another model example that promoted peace across the African continent was aimed at combating racism when, through sport, the South African leader Nelson Mandela conveyed a message at the 1995 Rugby World Cup, hosted by South Africa, in order to unify the children of his people and combat apartheid.

In 1894, when Coubertin re-established the modern Olympic Games, he believed in the importance of sport as a form of spiritual energy and promoted that philosophy so as to spread love and peace among peoples through the Games. In that same vein, he established the principles of the Games, whereby participation and fair play, rather than winning, were to be the key goals.

The Olympic Movement brings to life the principles of the Olympic Charter, as well as peace and human dignity, thereby fostering development. The example and experience of the Olympic Games provide us with an opportunity to reflect on the power of sport to unite us, the best illustration of which is the concept of the Olympic Village, which brings athletes from more than 200 States together in one place. The guiding principal of the Olympic ideal is that sport is synonymous with peace, and is almost magically reflected in efforts to promote peace and development.

In conclusion, within the framework of the United Nations we see today many similarities between the principles of our Organization and the International Olympic Committee in their parallel efforts aimed at promoting peace through sport. The most striking example of such cooperation and solidarity was the support provided for a group of refugee athletes — a first-of-a-kind moment in the history of the Olympic Games — when in Rio de Janeiro more than 10 young athletes participated in the 2016 Games and were given an opportunity to move beyond war and conflicts.

Ms. Wong (Singapore): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our sincere condolences for the lives lost as a result of the earthquake that affected Iran and Iraq this past weekend. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their loved ones.

Singapore is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled, “Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, under agenda item 11. Singapore thanks the Republic of Korea for its successful efforts in coordinating the draft resolution, which recognizes the ideals represented by the Olympic Truce, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus in the General Assembly today.

The practice and goal of perfection in sport represent a force for good in many societies. The values of hard work and self-discipline and the determination to do better inspire the human spirit. Sport brings together people of various origins, creeds, cultures and nationalities, and enhances mutual understanding through a spirit of friendship and fair play. That is the spirit of the Olympic Games, which, since the first modern Olympic Games, in 1896, has not only symbolized the pinnacle of achievement in sports, but also plays a crucial role in bridging communities and promoting tolerance, social inclusion, peace, cooperation and sustainable development.

Singapore recognizes the importance of sport in everyday life. Nationally, sport can bring together diverse groups of people in a spirit of solidarity and imbue them with a greater sense of pride in their country. At the community level, sport helps to bring about better health outcomes. Our Government has therefore actively promoted sports in Singapore. ActiveSG, a national sport movement, was launched to encourage Singaporeans to become active by providing access to affordable and exciting sports activities

and programmes. In addition, to ensure that sport in Singapore remains an inclusive activity, the disability sports master plan was launched in 2016 to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate and excel in sport if they so wish. Recognizing that areas intended for sport are not only places for training but also common spaces for people to gather and connect with one another, we have also set up a master plan for sports facilities to provide greater access to a network of sports amenities and enable people to live better through sport.

We are glad to see that some of our efforts have paid off. At the Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games in 2016, the Singapore team did us proud by achieving our best-ever result of two gold and one silver medal, won by Paralympian swimmers Yip Pin Xiu and Theresa Goh, respectively. The year 2016 was also a milestone for us, as our swimmer Joseph Schooling won Singapore's first ever Olympic gold medal. Those achievements show that success knows no boundaries. Individuals from any country can succeed if they put their minds to it and work hard for their goals.

The benefits of sport also transcend national boundaries. Sport can help to promote closer ties and friendships among neighbours and beyond. As part of our ongoing contributions to sporting events in the region, Singapore hosted the twenty-eighth Southeast Asian Games and the eighth Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Para Games in 2015. Our athletes participated actively in the recent twenty-ninth Southeast Asian Games and ninth ASEAN Para Games, held in Kuala Lumpur. We are glad to see the many transnational friendships and inspiring personal stories of athletes that emerged during those events. We look forward to supporting and participating in the series of successive Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in North-East Asia, and hope that they will serve as avenues to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

Just as Baron de Coubertin, the creator of the modern Olympic Games, once said,

“[t]he most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well”.

Sport inspires a nobler human spirit and is an enabler of individuals and communities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has recognized the role of sport in the realization of development and peace and in the promotion of tolerance, respect and the

empowerment of women and young people, as well as its many contributions to health, education and our goals of social inclusion. Let us continue to uphold the spirit of the Olympic Truce and aim to build a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for our peoples.

Ms. Mohamed Didi (Maldives): The Olympic Movement is a celebration of humankind and human values. Sport has the power to inspire and energize human development, and the Olympic ideal has helped to create equality and a level-playing field to bring out the best in humankind. The Maldives is proud to be an active participant in the Olympic Movement. Maldivian athletes took the great leap forward by participating in the Olympic Games for the first time in 1988. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime moment, not only for those who participated, but for future generations of youth who were inspired by the ideals of the Olympic Movement to build a peaceful and better world through sport.

The Olympic Movement has an extraordinary ability to give hope and renew aspirations precisely when one is faced with difficult challenges. The participation of an Olympic team of refugees during the 2016 Summer Olympics Games in Rio de Janeiro made history and gave optimism, courage and faith to millions of refugees around the world. Not only did those athletes help foster hope for millions of people facing unimaginable barriers in reaching their aspirations, it showed the world that through sport no barrier is insurmountable.

My delegation commends that initiative, which reflects the human connections among communities that transcend boundaries. The President of the Maldives, Mr. Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, has prioritized youth development and empowerment through opportunities that will unleash their creativity and enable them to realize their full potential. That will allow them to aim higher, dream bigger and dream new dreams. Sport development is, of course, a significant component of youth development. The Maldives enacted its first sport bill in September 2015. The legislation aims to assist in the promotion of competitive sports and cultural activities at the international, national and local levels. It also outlines policies and guidelines for facilitating sports development with community-level participation.

The Maldives recognizes the important role that sport plays in peace and security. That is why we pioneered the implementation of Security Council

resolution 2250 (2015), on improving programmes for youth. The Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Maldives, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme in the Maldives, held an official ceremony in the Maldives in August 2016 to launch the implementation of the resolution, becoming the first country to do so in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Government of the Maldives continues to make significant investments in sport infrastructure. Such projects are designed for young people to develop their leadership skills and to provide them with support networks outside their homes. We have also successfully conducted sport festivals that aim to create peace and harmony within society. The Government promotes the inclusion of women by giving them greater opportunities, and has been encouraging female participation in sport so as to challenge traditional gender stereotypes.

It will be vital to empower our growing populations of young people to be active citizens in their communities, where they can foster economic and social progress. Sport programmes, coordinated by the United Nations, Government agencies and non-governmental organizations, have been found to facilitate sustainable development and peaceful coexistence. It is therefore encouraging to see the role of sport in peace and development reflected in all of the 17 goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to see that in action in countries around the world.

One of the most important and enduring lessons sport offers is building resilience even in the face of enormous challenges. Sport is not a panacea for all societal problems, nor can it resolve all global conflicts. Nonetheless, for those who have lost their way, sport can provide a sense of purpose, joy amid sorrow and hope in the face of despair.

Ms. Fisher-tsin (Israel): We welcome the upcoming adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, of which Israel is proud to be a sponsor.

Sport and peace are intertwined. Sport encourages teamwork, which extends well beyond the field, teaches tolerance, which extends beyond the court, and builds friendships that last far longer than those crucial final seconds of overtime. Israel believes that sport is a key ingredient in coexistence and goodwill. Sport is crucial for rebinding communities. It builds inclusive societies

and empowers young people, women and persons with disabilities to achieve what they are capable of. Sport lays the groundwork for peace and prosperity for all.

As a country in a conflict-ridden region, Israel makes a point of ensuring that all young people learn to play on the same team. Mifalot Chinuch is an initiative founded by Hapoel Tel Aviv, one of Israel’s biggest football clubs. Its goal is to see football not just as a game but rather as a great uniting force — a universal language and a common shared culture. Mifalot Chinuch programmes provide an effective platform for building bridges between Israelis and Palestinians, and for seeing each other as teammates, not as the other. Through teamwork, the hope for peace grows, one scored goal at a time.

That educational model has extended beyond the borders of Israel to local communities across the world, including in Cambodia, Rwanda, Jordan, Haiti and India. In Cambodia, Mifalot Chinuch established a programme for the empowerment of young women through sport entitled Levelling the Playing Field. Once again, through sport, girls gain the confidence and training to become tomorrow’s agents of change, achieve gender equality and give back to their communities.

Mifalot Chinuch is just one example of the remarkable ability of sport to build peace. This past May, Israel spearheaded a local sport-for-peace effort in Nigeria entitled “Israel Cares Kids’ Football League.” The initiative targeted children aged 8 to 12 who had been displaced from their homes by the terrorist organization Boko Haram. Israel provided uniforms, balls and coaches for the programme, giving over 200 children an outlet that provided trust, safety and calm. Their participation in sport offers a sense of belonging and a new group of friends, while also restoring hope for peace.

Sport should be used as a tool to unite, not divide. It should be used to create inclusion, not exclusion or politicization. The lessons of sport have the power to throw a wrench into the seemingly endless cycle of conflict around our world. By giving every man, woman and child full and equal access to sport, we grow closer to a peaceful future for all.

Mr. Sharifuddin (Brunei Darussalam): Brunei Darussalam fully supports the discussions under today’s agenda item. We are also pleased to once again be a sponsor of draft resolution A/72/L.5.

We join others today in giving due recognition to the role that sport plays in development and peace and in advancing social progress. We are pleased that that is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically in its paragraph 37, which recognizes sport as an important enabler of sustainable development that promotes tolerance and respect and contributes to the empowerment of women, young people, individuals and communities, as well as to education and social inclusion objectives.

We believe that sport is a powerful tool in the promotion and advancement of peace and harmony. That is evident, as sport leads to healthier lifestyles, more interaction, friendship and community-building.

We should especially encourage our young people to participate in sport programmes, events and exchanges, which can promote mutual trust and respect, tolerance and a greater appreciation of other cultures and ways of life, and can also forge lasting bonds of friendship. Instilling such shared values and ideals is important to young people's development. Sport can also act as a positive outlet for countering the various challenges that many of our youth face today, such as drug abuse, violent extremism and high levels of unemployment.

Brunei Darussalam continues to emphasize the positive contribution of sport to socioeconomic development. Under our national policy, sport is a means of enhancing the quality of life and building a healthy nation. It also goes hand in hand with our National Vision 2035, which aspires to create a well-educated and highly skilled society with an improved quality of life, as well as a dynamic and sustainable economy.

The development of sport remains a high priority for the Government of Brunei Darussalam, and significant investment has been made to provide sport with adequate recreational infrastructure so as to promote the creation of a healthy and active community.

Integral to that endeavour is inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as among national sporting bodies. One such project is the My Happy City initiative, whereby every Sunday the capital city is designated as a car-free zone for people to engage in sporting activities such as cycling, running and aerobics. It brings together sport enthusiasts of all ages and abilities, irrespective of their social background or economic status. Not only has the initiative contributed to reviving our capital as a centre for community, sporting, commercial and tourist

activities, it has also promoted healthy lifestyles and a sporting culture among the people. That is in line with the vision for world health of the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

At the same time, while recognizing sport's contributions to the empowerment of people, we are also taking steps to train and develop quality athletes, including women and persons with disabilities, who can compete at the local, regional and international levels. Our participation in various regional and international sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Islamic Solidarity Games, the Asian Games and the Southeast Asian Games, has helped our athletes strive for excellence and bring sporting achievements and recognition to our country. Moreover, such participation has enabled our athletes to foster friendships with other athletes, thereby promoting better understanding, respect and tolerance of other cultures. All of those are values that contribute to peace.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam is firmly committed to working with other Member States and related regional and international bodies in advancing sport, particularly as such activities contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Al-Abdulla (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank the President for convening today's meeting under agenda item 11.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the sponsors of draft resolution A/72/L.5, on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideals.

The draft resolution reflects Qatar's conviction that sport has the power to strengthen education, sustainable development, peace, cooperation and solidarity at all levels. By fostering peace and reflecting and embodying the role of sport, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also highlights sport as a means of achieving sustainable development. Given the fact that sport plays a role in encouraging tolerance, respect and the empowerment of women and individuals, Qatar accords particular importance to sport at the national, regional and international levels. We have successfully hosted a number of sporting events, such as the Asian Games in 2006. The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage considers that sport can be used in order to develop peace. We also hope to host the International

Football Federation World Cup in 2022, which would be the first time that our region hosted such an event.

I would like to point out the key role that our Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage has played in preparing Qatar to host the World Cup through the promotion of peace and mutual understanding, based on the fundamental principle of the role that sport plays in strengthening dialogue among peoples and cultures and in promoting peace and development. Sport also helps Qatar build towards its national vision for 2030 and create a strong, healthy society, serving to strengthen relations among the citizens of the country. We have always supported the role that sport plays, and we celebrate National Sports Day as a national holiday.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and Sports to promote sports and the excellence of sports across the country. We also commend the additional efforts of the Qatar Olympic Committee to facilitate the development of sport. We have in place a number of programmes and initiatives that strive for the same objective across all levels. Through the Qatar Olympic Committee, we have also provided significant assistance to communities that are in need due to various difficult circumstances across various areas of the world.

Mr. Hoshino (Japan): Sport has the power to nurture dreams and bring hope to people. It has the power to change the world, and even the future of humankind. In the spirit of peace, I hope that the international community will once again come together to adopt this important draft resolution on the Olympic Truce (A/72/L.5), as it has done every year since 1993.

Japan appreciates the initiative and leadership of the Republic of Korea, the host of next year's Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, in submitting this year's draft resolution. As a sponsor, Japan would like to highlight the importance of the independence and autonomy of sport and of ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic Games should be organized in the spirit of peace, mutual understanding, friendship, tolerance and the inadmissibility of discrimination of any kind. We are grateful that those fundamental principles, drawn from the Olympic Charter, are reflected in the draft resolution. Japan firmly believes that next year's games in Pyeongchang will realize those ideals and objectives.

Japan will be next to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in Tokyo in 2020. We want the Tokyo 2020 Games to realize the three ideals

of achieving personal best, unity in diversity and connecting to tomorrow. Based on the concept of achieving one's personal best, the Tokyo 2020 Games will aim to deliver an event where all athletes can realize their greatest athletic performance and achieve their personal best. Unity in diversity acknowledges the importance of accepting and respecting differences so that peace can be maintained and society continue to develop and flourish. As for the concept of connecting to tomorrow, I would like to recall that the Tokyo 1964 Games were a major factor in Japan's rapid economic growth at the time.

We hope that the Tokyo 2020 Games will enable Japan to promote transformative changes that can provide an opportunity to bring hopes and dreams to the areas affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster. We believe that showing the world the affected region's recovery and reconstruction will be a way of expressing Japan's gratitude to all those who have helped us in efforts that continue to this day. In that regard, the Government of Japan is promoting exchanges between the affected areas and the world.

Since 2014, in the lead-up to 2020, the Government of Japan has been steadily implementing various projects under the programme "Sport for Tomorrow", while recognizing that sport enables societal and economic development. The programme aims to reach over 10 million people in more than 100 countries. More specifically, we are implementing such projects as sending coaches and athletes abroad or inviting them to Japan and providing sports facilities. We believe that such projects contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, Japan will continue working to promote the sport so that the 2018 Pyeongchang Games will be a success, not only in terms of the Games themselves but also in building a spirit of peace throughout the world. I would like to assure the General Assembly that the Tokyo 2020 Games will do the same.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to reiterate Cuba's continued support for the international community's efforts to promote sport as a means of fostering development, peace and social inclusion. That is why we have decided to sponsor the draft resolution introduced by the Republic of Korea under this agenda item (A/72/L.5).

The widespread practice of sport as a right to be enjoyed by all is one of the major achievements of the

Cuban Revolution in terms of human rights. Sport, physical education and sport-related recreational activities reach every corner of our country, and universal access is guaranteed for young and old alike, including programmes for special-education centres and the disabled. Cuba has trained a considerable number of specialized physical-education teachers responsible for implementing our physical culture and health development strategy in all communities in the country, which has benefited all children and adolescents, young people, women — including pregnant women — and the elderly.

Cuba also has a network of sports facilities with services in all municipalities to foster and encourage the practice of sport. Each province in the country has a school of physical culture, from which mid- and higher-level professionals in the field graduate each year. The achievements in this sector are further complemented by our specialized centres for training athletes and a robust sports-medicine system, which includes a modern anti-doping laboratory recognized by the International Olympic Committee, affirming Cuba's commitment to fighting that scourge.

Despite being a small developing country, over the past 58 years Cuba has achieved sustained successes in sport at the regional and global levels. We are the one hundred and sixth largest country in the world in terms of surface area, and eighty-second by population. However, in terms of sport we rank first in the Central American and Caribbean region, second in the Americas and, on average, eighteenth at the Olympic level, among more than 200 other countries.

Cuba's worldwide solidarity with coaches and physical-education teachers also enhance the prestige of Cuban sport. True to its internationalist vocation, Cuba has offered to cooperate in the development of sport in many countries, and we will continue to do so to the best of our ability.

All the achievements I mentioned have been possible thanks to the political will of our Government and the active participation of our people, despite the obstacles imposed by the criminal blockade imposed against my country, which has caused serious restrictions on the development of sport.

Finally, Cuba reiterates its firm commitment to the promotion of sport as a vehicle for the promotion of peace, the building of fairer and more supportive

societies and the making of a better world for present and future generations.

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): Dating back to the eighth century before the common era, the ancient Olympic Games were a force for peace and solidarity among ancient Greek city-States, which would declare a truce for a period of seven days before the beginning and after the end of the Games. The ultimate goal was the peaceful conduct of the Games, which was ensured by protecting the host city from invasion and ordering individuals and State authorities to refrain from interfering with the safe passage of the athletes. As Thucydides wrote, when States violated the truce, their athletes were banned from participating in the Games.

The concept of the Olympic Truce was born in antiquity and was respected and followed for a period of 1,200 years. The Greeks viewed the Games as an opportunity to replace conflict with friendly competition. However, the truce ideal was also of great importance in the revival of the Olympic Games in the modern era as an invaluable tool for advancing international cooperation and promote world peace.

In today's world, an emphasis on Olympic peace has become a major feature of modern Olympic ideology. The foundation of the International Olympic Truce Centre, for the creation of which Greece actively engaged with the International Olympic Committee, gave the pursuit of peace a new dynamism. Most importantly, the inclusion of the Olympic Truce in the United Nations framework through the adoption of relevant resolutions granted a distinct role to the ideal. We should bear in mind that, in a world of differences, inequalities and conflicts, engagement in even a temporary truce is an achievement for the international community. It is therefore our responsibility to continue to promote the Olympic Truce and spare no effort to ensure its actual implementation.

In 2018, the Republic of Korea will host the Pyeongchang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. I take this opportunity to wish the Republic of Korea every success in this demanding endeavour. For the rest of us, it is our task to fulfil our responsibilities by observing the Olympic Truce and thereby making peace an attainable goal. We should all find inspiration in next year's Olympic Games and reflect on how sport could be used as a useful tool to reduce tensions and build bridges.

Mr. Prasad (India): India welcomes the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, which is in keeping with the affirmation of Heads of State and Government in the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that sport is an important enabler of sustainable development.

If sustainable development is about promoting a range of economic, social and community-based outcomes to build sustainable societies, the value of sport as a means of bringing children, and therefore their parents, and young people together to cooperate and participate in tackling common issues cannot be questioned. This is in addition to its direct value in promoting the health of children and young adults, which itself is a key element of development.

In that context, India would like to express its appreciation for the work over the past decade of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and for the valuable contribution of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace. The designation of 6 April as International Day of Sport for Development and Peace has been an important marker for emphasizing the relevance of sport to development and peace.

The spread of the Olympic movement and its popularity, as well as the immense following and popularity of national and world championships of major sports, such as soccer, basketball, cricket, hockey and tennis, highlight their role as celebrations of global goodwill. The stories of many sports superstars who have risen from poverty and destitution are powerful messages of hope and happiness to millions of young people in the world. In turn, sports stars can become valuable messengers by spreading development messages.

As the national sport of India that reaches millions of people in cities, towns and villages in the country, cricket and its stars provide a very important platform for spreading social messages. The greatest icon of Indian cricket, Sachin Tendulkar, illustrates this fact. Tendulkar was part of a popular national campaign to promote hygiene among children that encouraged schoolchildren to wash their hands before eating food. Similarly, he has recently been a brand ambassador for India’s *Swachh Bharat*, or Clean India, campaign.

Another Government initiative that has advanced social and educational development in backward areas

has been the system of sports hostels spread across the country. These are residential sports schools, created to take advantage of location-specific sports talent. Sports hostels in eastern India, particularly in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand, have provided an educational platform for young girls from tribal areas in the two states. This opportunity has paid dividends not only for the young women themselves but also for India. Today, India’s junior and senior women’s hockey teams are dominated by players who have emerged from those tribal areas.

Sport’s capacity for making a positive impact on peace and security is vividly illustrated by UNICEF’s Sports for Development programme in the Sukma district of the leftist insurgency-affected Indian state of Chhattisgarh, where Naxalism, the local leftist insurgency, had become a very serious problem. The UNICEF programme, initiated in 2006—2007, was an effort to address issues arising from the civil strife in the region, particularly with regard to children affected by violence and displacement. Implemented through *khel mitras*, or sports mentors, those mentors used sports and games to connect with children so as to help them to deal with the violence and resulting trauma and encourage them to continue going to school. This, in turn, provided the window for bringing key messages to the children and their parents on development issues and lifestyle changes. The programme’s success has seen its expansion across primary schools in the state of Chhattisgarh.

I would also like to mention two innovative sport-for-development programmes run by non-governmental institutions in India, which highlight the potential of sports as a community builder and contributor to development initiatives. The first is Project KHEL, a programme that uses sport as a platform to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds to grow into responsible and contributing members of society. Working from Lucknow, a major city in central India, Project KHEL works with orphans, street children, children of migrant labourers and children from slums in a four-month-long biweekly sports and games programme, which focuses on building a personal sense of worth in the children and on teaching them problem-solving skills. Specific sessions also focus on issues such as health, substance abuse, a civic sense and personal hygiene. Today, the organization is working with 10 partner institutions and two slum locations in the city.

A similar programme in the western metropolis of Mumbai is the OSCAR Foundation, which uses football — soccer — to teach the value of education and life skills to underprivileged children. The specific objective of the programme is to support children and young people in continuing in school. OSCAR's young leaders work as role models and mentors for these children.

While organized sport is today a major source of entertainment in the world and an industry on its own, the challenge of extending the pleasures of sport and its benefits to millions of young children in the less developed and developing worlds should remain an important objective. India therefore sees sport as an important building block in creating a peaceful and better world and will be supportive of all efforts to spread the message of sports and development.

Mrs. Matar (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would first like to thank the Republic of Korea for having submitted draft resolution A/72/L.5, which seeks to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal. It is my pleasure to underscore the fact that Bahrain will support the adoption of the draft resolution out of the conviction that sport should be used to achieve development and to promote sustainable development, peace, education, cooperation and health.

The capacity and potential of sport to cross borders and transcend language means that it is a good way to help settle conflicts and strengthen sustainable peace. Sport is a universal phenomenon that brings people together and can help to build strong partnerships in a world that is increasingly unified. This is the truth. We must therefore protect that unity by standing together against hate, violence and extremism. In this regard, I wish to underscore the importance of making sure that sport serves development and peace and that it can be used to counter all forms of discrimination and hatred.

With support from the King of Bahrain, we are particularly eager to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that sport can play an important role in implementing these overarching goals, since it can help to strengthen unity and peace. It is for this reason that 7 February is National Sports Day in Bahrain, dedicated to upholding the noble Olympic ideals and promoting and practicing sport. It is our deep conviction that sport can be used to strengthen

and uphold human rights, as well as to reinforce global respect for its values.

We believe that the active participation of people with special needs is one way that we can achieve equal rights. We therefore want to fully support athletes with special needs to participate in events geared especially to them, for example, basketball.

We have been able to carry out activities related to sport in many areas under the auspices of our Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Bahrain Olympic Committee, which is part of the comprehensive efforts of Bahrain's Deputy Prime Minister. We have been able to deliver on all of those ideals through active participation in sporting competitions at the regional and international levels, which includes the participation of women and disabled individuals.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain wishes to underscore the importance of sport and its important role in achieving sustainable development, respect for all, the empowerment of women and the promotion of health, education and social integration and inclusion.

Mr. Louati (Tunisia): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea for its commendable and successful efforts aimed at facilitating draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Tunisia welcomes the forthcoming adoption of this important draft resolution, which is a testament to the crucial role of sport in achieving peace and development. My delegation has been a sponsor of the draft resolution since the beginning of the process.

I would like to recall that Tunisia and Monaco, as Chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, are committed to promoting all initiatives that support the role of sport in building a better world for humankind. Furthermore, at the national level, the promotion of sport is an important component of Tunisian development policy.

As we struggle to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is our strong belief that sport is an effective way to help to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly regarding the promotion of education, health, women and youth empowerment, social inclusion and peace. In this regard, let me recall that sport is recognized as an important enabler for sustainable development in

the 2030 Agenda, particularly through its growing contribution to the realization of development and peace, its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contribution it makes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities. It also contributes to the 2030 Agenda's objectives in relation to health, education and social inclusion. We are all aware of the power of sport as an important enabler of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations.

Recognizing the essential nature of the Olympic Truce ideal in fostering peace, Tunisia underscores the importance of cooperation among Member States in implementing the draft resolution so as to realize the values of the Olympic Truce around the world. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee to the promotion of peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal, which also contributes to the fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations. Finally, I take this opportunity to wish the Republic of Korea every success in organizing the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2018.

The President: In accordance with resolution 64/3, of 19 October 2009, I now call on the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Bach (International Olympic Committee): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the General Assembly once again. Today is an important time to reaffirm the values on which both the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are built. I would like to very warmly thank you, Mr. President, for having emphasized these shared values in such an impressive way earlier this morning.

I would also like to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for submitting the Olympic Truce draft resolution (A/72/L.5) ahead of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games to be held in Pyeongchang. I thank the Chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, Monaco and Tunisia, for all their efforts in this process. My gratitude also extends to the many Member States that have already shown their support for the draft resolution as sponsors.

The shared goal of the United Nations and the IOC is to make the world a better and more peaceful place. For the IOC, this means putting sport at the service of the peaceful development of humankind. The Olympic

Truce draft resolution before the Assembly today is an expression of the shared commitment to humankind of both our organizations.

In ancient Greece, the tradition of *ekecheiria* involved a sacred truce among Greek city-States. The Olympic Truce ensured a halt of hostilities, allowing for the safe passage and participation of athletes and spectators to the Olympic Games. Then, as now, the Olympic Games are a symbol of hope and peace. In our troubled times today, we see that these Olympic values of peace, solidarity and respect are eternal values.

The draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" builds on that 3000-year-old tradition. Paragraph 1 of the draft resolution L.5 urges Member States

"to ensure the safe passage, access and participation of athletes, officials and all other accredited persons taking part in the Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games".

This specific call is of particular importance, especially with regard to the time and place of the Olympic Winter Games. By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly recognizes once more the relevance of the Olympic Games to fostering peace and understanding in our fragile world.

Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement, once said: "The Olympic Games are a pilgrimage to the past and an act of faith in the future." In the same spirit, the support of States Members of the United Nations for this draft resolution is an expression of faith by the international community in a peaceful future for our world. The power of the Olympic Games is their universality and global appeal. Based on our principle of political neutrality, the Olympic Games stand above and beyond all the political differences that divide us. In our fragile world, which is drifting apart, the Olympic Games have the power to unite humankind in all its diversity. In our fragile world, polarization and mistrust are growing. In our fragile world, the Olympic Games always build bridges. They never erect walls.

Sport plays a unique role in putting the values of peace, solidarity and respect into action. The important role of sport in society was confirmed by the General Assembly when recognizing sport in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an important enabler, in particular to foster peace and understanding.

The last time that I addressed the General Assembly was ahead of the adoption of resolution 70/4, the Olympic Truce resolution for the Olympic Games Rio 2016 (see A/70/PV.39). On that occasion, I announced the creation of the first-ever refugee Olympic team. Their participation at the Olympic Games sent a message of hope to the millions of refugees around the world. It was a demonstration of how sport is this important enabler. To make this a reality, we enjoyed the strong cooperation of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose Office I would like to thank once more for its continuing support.

Knowing that the theme of this seventy-second session of the General Assembly is “Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet”, I would like to address the Assembly for a moment as an Olympic athlete myself. I do so because, for Olympic athletes, this draft resolution will carry a very special significance and a deeply personal one. It is the dream of every athlete to compete at the Olympic Games. For us athletes, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It is our moment to shine.

With the Olympic Truce resolution, the General Assembly is creating the conditions for all athletes to compete in peace. Only the States Members of the United Nations can guarantee athletes’ safe passage to the Olympic Games. They make it possible for all the Olympic athletes to realize their dream of a lifetime. One may ask why this should matter to the international community. The answer is simple: the Olympic athletes show the whole world that it is possible to compete with each other while living peacefully together under one roof at the same time.

In the Olympic Village, where the athletes live during the competitions, we see our values of tolerance and respect come to life. Athletes from all National Olympic Committees, from every corner of the world, live together in harmony under one roof. The athletes live side by side in what is literally a global village. They share their meals, experiences and emotions. They are competitors in sport, but they share their respect for each other in victory and defeat. That is why the athletes are our best ambassadors for our ideals and values. The athletes lead by example. Our fragile world needs such symbols of friendship and tolerance more than ever before.

My sincere thanks for their great work go to the Government of the Republic of Korea and to the Pyeongchang Organizing Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games under the able leadership of President Lee Hee-beom. They have created the best venues and conditions for the best winter-sport athletes in our world. When Pyeongchang welcomes the world, just 87 days from today, it will be an important reminder that the Olympic Games are always a time when the international community comes together to celebrate our shared humanity.

The IOC would like to reiterate our invitation to everyone to join us at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. In sport, we are all equal. That is why everyone is invited to celebrate our shared values, the best of the human spirit and our unity in diversity. The 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang will give us hope in our troubled times for a better future. The Olympic Games demonstrate that our values of a shared humanity are stronger than all the forces that want to divide us. With the support of the delegations here today, the Olympic spirit will come alive right here among the nations of the world gathered at the General Assembly. This is another example of the fact that Olympic principles are United Nations principles. On behalf of all the athletes in the world, I thank the Assembly very much for sharing this Olympic spirit.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.5, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution A/72/L.5, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Dominica, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, the Gambia, Georgia, Grenada, Guyana, Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar,

Maldives, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, the Federated States of Micronesia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.5?

Draft resolution A/72/L.5 was adopted (resolution 72/6).

The President: I thank our guests for joining us this morning and once again express my best wishes to the Republic of Korea for the twenty-third Winter Olympic Games.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

Agenda items 120 and 121

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: The agenda item for our meeting today refers to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. In simple terms, we are here to explore how to strengthen the role of this body, improve the work we do and best address the interests of the Governments and, more importantly, the people we are all here to represent. This is therefore a discussion that affects all of us.

I want to express my sincere thanks to Ambassadors Drobnjak and Nusseibeh, of Croatia and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, for their dedicated work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the seventy-first session. I am confident that all Member States will offer their full support to Ambassador Drobnjak, as well as to his newly appointed co-Chair, Ambassador Mejía Vélez of Colombia, in the session ahead. I want to make four main points today.

The first is that this process does work. Over the past few years, we have made achievements. A major example is, of course, the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. For decades, this was a secret process; however, Member States said no to business as usual. That is why, in 2016, things were done differently. For the first time, the world had an opportunity to review and even interact with the candidates for the top position at the United Nations. Member States have also mandated me to continue this trend of transparency and inclusiveness in the selection of my successor.

The introduction of an oath of office and code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly were further powerful achievements. Now, no President can ever claim that he or she is ignorant of the standards and responsibility attached to this Office. Another tangible result was seen through the adoption of resolutions that set clear time frames for elections. These have helped Member States to better prepare for their roles, including as members of the Economic and Social Council and as non-permanent members of the Security Council.

My second point is more personal. I am not here just to call for action from Member States; action is needed from me as well. I was the second president in history to take the oath of office, and I follow this oath closely as I work to uphold the high standards of transparency and ethics set by my two predecessors. This work has taken three main forms. The first is through full disclosure related to the financing, staffing and travel of my Office; all such information is available on my website. I will soon become the first President of the General Assembly to publish a summary of my financial disclosure statement online, which I hope will serve as a concrete measure for stepping up the commitment of this Office to transparency. The second way relates to the activities of my Office. I publish my agenda on my website every day. My spokesperson also gives daily briefings to the media. These efforts are not just geared towards transparency, they are also intended to promote awareness and interest in the activities of the General Assembly.

The third way is through interaction with other parts of the United Nations system. I intend to make full use of the General Committee, as requested by resolution 71/323. I met informally with the Committee before the start of the regular session to allow for a frank exchange of views. Our third meeting of the session is scheduled to take place in December. Additionally, I hold monthly

meetings with the Secretary-General and the presidents of the Security Council and Economic and Social Council to strengthen coherence throughout our work. I want to use the opportunity presented by this meeting to stress my commitment to the revitalization process.

My third point today is that we need to look ahead. We will discuss many important issues during the seventy-second session. Three issues that may be considered include, first, conduct related to election campaigns; secondly, the strengthening of interaction between Permanent Missions and the Secretariat; and thirdly, options for establishing a longer-term and more transparent rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees. The issue of reform will also be high on our agenda, which will provide us with an opportunity to enhance the General Assembly's engagement with and role throughout the United Nations system.

When looking ahead, I want to point to the gap between the level of mandated activities and events and the capacity of the United Nations system to support them. My Office is grappling with this challenge, and I urge the Assembly to address it. On a related note, I want to highlight the lack of institutional memory within this Office. Investment in human capital is needed if Member States wish to maintain standards of work and ensure smooth transitions between presidencies.

As I have said before, action is needed from me as well. I have launched a series of morning dialogues, which will target all States Members of the United Nations. These dialogues are intended to complement the ongoing processes of the seventy-second session, such as the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Finally, I want to remind all of us of the responsibility on our shoulders. The General Assembly is the most representative body of the United Nations. It gives all 193 Member States a voice and a vote. It deals with all three pillars of the work of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. It also draws in all actors and entities from across the United Nations system. That is why the impact of the work of the General Assembly extends far beyond this Hall. In fact, what we do here affects the credibility and outcomes of the United Nations as a whole. Improving the way we work is therefore not only in the interest of all of us here today — it is also in the interest of people in their homes and communities, thousands of miles away from here.

I believe that this Hall should be a place for dialogue, a place we should enter with ideas and proposals and exit from with new perspectives and achievements. This is a place where the interests of all 193 Member States and the billions of people they represent can be advanced.

The General Assembly cannot be a place to advance our own interests. It cannot be a place we come to with nothing but red lines and static positions, even if that might be a tempting option, because it could lead to a win for just one person or one State or one group. But overall, we will all lose. I urge everyone to bear that in mind as we discuss the revitalization of the work of this body.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), which is one of the largest cross-regional groups, consisting of 120 member States. Let me say that all ceremonial protocol, including appreciation to the co-Chairs and to the President of the General Assembly, is respected.

We reiterate that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations. A reinvigorated General Assembly would significantly contribute to strengthening the wider United Nations system, improving international governance and enhancing multilateralism. A thorough evaluation of the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions and a clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack of implementation are vital.

We fully adhere to the letter and spirit of the consensus resolutions 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323, which are now the cornerstones for the evolution of the reform of the United Nations. In this regard, the Movement recalls the decision taken in paragraph 4 of resolutions 68/307, 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323 to continue the process of the comprehensive review of the inventory of the resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the status of their implementation. However, we also take note of the fact that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/70/681 has not yet been implemented.

During the current session we wish to emphasize the following. First, with respect to the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the appointment should continue to be transparent, democratic and inclusive of all

Member States, so as to enable the General Assembly to participate effectively and efficiently in the selection and appointment process. The Non-Aligned Movement proudly recalls the role played by the General Assembly under Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations and its consensual resolutions 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323. We should not forget that the Secretary-General will be appointed and selected by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

We find the implementation of paragraph 42 of resolution 69/321, paragraph 36 of resolution 70/305 and paragraph 56 of resolution 71/323 on the organization of informal dialogues to be encouraging. While welcoming the signing of the joint letter by which the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council formally launch the beginning of the process, it is the clear understanding of the Non-Aligned Movement that whatever the stage of the presentation of the candidates, the new procedure, as outlined in the joint letter of the President of the General Assembly and President of the Security Council, will always be followed. Furthermore, NAM calls on the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to continue to hold timely informal meetings for an exchange of views with candidates presented by Member States.

We also believe, as suggested in the 2011 report (A/66/34) of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), that prevailing practices in the election of executive heads in other United Nations system organizations could also be suitable for the appointment of the Secretary-General. We therefore recommend considering existing practices. Moreover, NAM would like to emphasize the issue of promises made by candidates in exchange for the support of the permanent members of the Security Council, which is described in the 2011 JIU report.

In that regard, we welcomed the significant number of women candidates, as stipulated in paragraph 44 of resolution 71/323. There was a discussion about the desirability for the Security Council to consider providing a plural number of candidates to the General Assembly for the appointment of the Secretary-General in future. We emphasize the need to re-examine the idea. We reiterate that the process of appointment of the Secretary-General by the General Assembly should be carried out in full compliance with the General Assembly's mandate, which includes the timely submission of the relevant draft resolution, which should be preceded by wide and extensive consultations

with all Member States, as well as ensuring the action of the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council, including by secret ballot, in full and strict conformity with rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

We take note of the request made by the Secretariat to all Member States encouraging nominating candidates to supplement the Secretary-General's search, in order to ensure a wide pool of candidates for positions at the level of Under-Secretary-General, and welcoming the nomination of women candidates. Bearing in mind the importance of the best practices and lessons learned from the last selection and appointment process, the Non-Aligned Movement is of the view that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly should consider developing a compendium of those best practices for future reference.

Secondly, with regard to the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, NAM finds it encouraging that an oath of office and a code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly have been adopted for the first time in the Assembly's history. The expansion of activities of the General Assembly has made the President's presence and active participation essential all year long. NAM also reiterates the need to assign additional posts to the Office of the President of the General Assembly on a permanent basis. Furthermore, we also appreciate the Member States that have provided concrete support to the Office of the President of the General Assembly by seconding staff members from their respective missions.

NAM also attaches great importance to ensuring successful annual transitions between the Presidents of the General Assembly, and requests that outgoing Presidents brief their successors on lessons learned and best practices. NAM expresses its support for effectively and genuinely strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as well as for allocating sufficient human and financial resources to the Office from the regular budget of the United Nations.

Thirdly, with respect to the role and authority of the General Assembly, NAM reaffirms that working methods are only one step towards more substantive improvements aimed at restoring and enhancing the Assembly's role and authority. We affirm the importance of preserving the intergovernmental,

inclusive and democratic nature of the United Nations and of consulting with Member States within the Organization, as well as of ensuring strict respect on the part of Member States for the Charter-based prerogatives of the United Nations principal organs, especially the General Assembly. We also support the initiative aimed at ensuring proper implementation of the Charter of the United Nations with respect to the functional relationship between its main organs, in particular the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. At the Ad Hoc Working Group's most recent meeting, there was a discussion of the need to establish, within its framework, a standing mechanism for dialogue between the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat, with a view to considering further required steps. We look forward to continuing that discussion.

Fourthly, on the working methods of the General Assembly, we welcomed paragraph 51 of resolution 71/323, which notes with appreciation the cost-neutral proposals on the possible changes to the format, production and editing of the *Journal of the United Nations*. We also welcomed its paragraphs 47 and 48, on communicating the names of candidates for election to the Secretariat 48 hours prior to an election where possible, as well as printing names on the ballot papers, and the decision that, on the day of elections, the campaign materials in the General Assembly Hall or the Committee meeting room should be limited to a single page of information regarding the candidates. NAM would like to recall here that the General Assembly has encouraged its Main Committees to continue considering and making proposals on their working methods during the current session. In that connection, we reiterate the importance of ensuring the intergovernmental and inclusive nature of these discussions on working methods, which must engage all delegations. We believe that more time should be dedicated to the negotiations on this draft resolution. Resolution 71/323 was adopted by consensus. However, we continue to insist that more flexibility should be the rule for all Member States in the next round of negotiations.

NAM calls for measures to enhance public awareness of the role and activities of the General Assembly and encourages improved media reporting of its work. We welcome paragraph 15 of resolution 71/323, which calls on the President of the General Assembly to organize debates in close coordination with the General Committee and Member States, including with regard

to their frequency. We believe that meetings held at the same time as the general debate of the General Assembly must be kept to an absolute minimum of only the most critical, in order to preserve and strengthen the sanctity of the general debate, a view reflected in paragraph 34 of resolution 71/323. Similarly, where all the high-level thematic debates convened by the President of the General Assembly are concerned, we need to improve the coordination of the revitalization process with the work of the Committee on Conferences.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We should also take a closer look at the process of arrangements for holding debates in the General Assembly and the Security Council and their follow-up, in view of the number of participating representatives. No oral statement should exceed the agreed-on number of minutes, and full versions can be circulated in the room or posted online. Organizers can make the record of the proceedings available. Furthermore, we propose holding briefings, as necessary, with the Chairs of the Main Committees, as well as a meeting with the Secretary-General. NAM also calls for improved monitoring of the implementation of past resolutions.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its commitment to contributing effectively and constructively to the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We hope for the same approach from other delegations and would like to humbly recall that we speak in the name of 120 member States. In addition, NAM stands ready to cooperate with you, Mr. President, the co-Chairs and the Secretary-General in strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking organ. We will continue to provide support aimed at achieving inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency in the United Nations.

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which consists of 10 member States — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Philippines.

ASEAN would like to convey its deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of the earthquakes in Iran and Iraq and in Costa Rica.

ASEAN also aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

ASEAN would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Croatia on their excellent work in the past year as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, as well as the Permanent Representative of Colombia, the incoming co-Chair together with the Ambassador of Croatia, and commends the progress they have made, as reflected in resolution 71/323, adopted by consensus on 8 September.

ASEAN would also like to reiterate its profound appreciation to Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, for his steadfast commitment to moving the agenda on revitalization forward and especially for his advocacy for accountability, transparency and openness. We would also like to once again congratulate the President of the Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák. We believe that under his leadership the process of revitalization will yield more positive results.

ASEAN believes that the revitalization process will make the Organization more effective, transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose. In the words of Secretary-General António Guterres, we have a shared responsibility to make the United Nations more effective and responsive to those we serve. We would therefore like to make the following key points on the four thematic clusters under the revitalization process.

With regard to the role and authority of the General Assembly, ASEAN reiterates its call for all Member States to work together to ensure that the General Assembly is able to fulfil its proper role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

With respect to the Assembly's working methods, ASEAN joins Member States on the recommendation to enhance synergies and coherence, reduce overlap where it exists on the Assembly's agenda, and introduce appropriate measures to raise public awareness of the Assembly's role and activities.

Regarding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads, ASEAN is of the view that resolution 71/323 must be implemented faithfully to ensure that the selection process is

transparent and inclusive and that the best possible candidate is selected for the position of Secretary-General. We also emphasize that the Secretary-General must exercise independence in selecting senior officials with adherence to the highest standards in such appointments, while ensuring equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographic balance.

With regard to strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, ASEAN stands ready to support the agenda and calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of resolution 71/323.

ASEAN welcomed resolution 71/323's reaffirmation of the importance and benefits of interaction between the United Nations and international and regional forums and organizations that deal with matters of global concern to the international community. We take note of the report to the President of the General Assembly on the strategic alignment of future sessions of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ASEAN also recognizes that complementarities exist between the 2030 Agenda and ASEAN's Community Vision 2025. We continue to recognize the importance of dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in taking forward the work of enhancing such complementarities, as reflected in the ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action for the period from 2016 to 2020.

ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to engaging effectively and constructively with all Member States in order to ensure success for the Ad Hoc Working Group in its task of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. With the political will of all Member States, not only will we be able to achieve concrete results, we will also be able to promote greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the United Nations. Revitalizing the work of the General Assembly under the four thematic clusters will contribute to the strategic evolution of the United Nations as an important platform where the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity prevail.

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

Ms. Adamson (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and

Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the President for convening today's plenary meeting. We look forward to working with him on the negotiations on the draft resolution on the subject during the coming weeks. I would like to thank Mr. Peter Thomson, the President of the Assembly at its seventy-first session, for his oversight of and engagement in the revitalization process of the General Assembly in the past year. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Mr. Vladimir Drobnyak and Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and the United Arab Emirates. We are sure their excellent work will continue under Mr. Drobnyak's ongoing leadership. We wish him and the new co-Chair success for this year and would like to express our support for the upcoming work in the hope of continuing the significant progress made in the previous session.

The recent resolutions on revitalizing the General Assembly have been groundbreaking. New and innovative ideas have been introduced, such as those on the process for the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including increasing its accountability, and most recently the decision to improve the Assembly's working methods. Resolutions on revitalizing the Assembly represent a success for all of us, the United Nations and Member States alike, and serve as proof of how much can be achieved through constructive, reform-oriented and consensus-based work. It is a result of the willingness of Member States to engage in a thorough, substantive debate on the numerous issues that are vital to the further improvement and enrichment of the work of the General Assembly.

For the EU and its member States, effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, remains key. We therefore continue to strongly support the Secretary-General in his reform efforts. Strengthening the Organization, and doing so based on effective and sustainable funding, in line with real capacities to pay and geared to increasing efficiency and accountability, remains a top priority. In that context, we remain committed to revitalization and to supporting

efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions. That is especially needed in the context of the global challenges that the world is facing today. An unceasing effort to find new and creative ways to work is essential if we are to achieve more effective delivery of mandates and the sustainable use of resources. Revitalizing the work of the General Assembly is clearly foundational for the overall reform of the United Nations.

Focusing on the negotiations ahead of us, we believe that the emphasis on the current session's draft resolution should be on consolidating the work achieved so far. We remain committed to contributing to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the workings of the General Assembly. I would like to assure the Assembly that the EU and its member States will continue to engage in a constructive manner in the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Ms. Zahir (Maldives): I would first like to thank Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnyak of Croatia and María Emma Mejía Vélez of Colombia for agreeing to serve as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, and to thank Ms. Mejía Vélez's predecessor, Ambassador Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates, for her leadership and valuable contribution, together with Mr. Drobnyak, during the previous session of this ongoing process.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report under this agenda item. I would once again like to impress upon the Secretariat the importance of circulating such reports to the membership in a timely manner so as to allow Member States to be able to review and discuss them in depth. That could be one of the crucial adjustments that we can make to enhance our working methods.

The Maldives applauds the small but significant strides that this process has been able to achieve so far. During the recently concluded elections held in the General Assembly Hall, the campaign materials and other items were restricted to one piece per candidate. That was a welcome change that we believe restored the atmosphere in this great Hall to one reflecting the seriousness of the business and proper decorum.

We believe that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the seventy-second session goes a bit too far. We support considering the potential concept and

scope of conduct in guiding Member States' conduct of election campaigns with a view to improving standards of transparency, accountability and equity. We believe that not only would such considerations ensure the election of the best person for the right job, they would also ensure that we uphold the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that current traditions leave small countries at a disadvantage. Every country, regardless of its size or might and certainly of how much it spends on a campaign, should have a fair chance to serve on the Charter bodies and other entities of the United Nations. Every voice, especially those in special situations, should be heard. How can we claim to have their concerns answered without their representation? We therefore believe that the same standards of transparency, fairness, and accountability that we expect in our domestic elections should be observed here at the United Nations. We hope that further work will be done on that issue during the current session.

The whole selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General, marked by unprecedented levels of transparency and inclusiveness, was yet another example of the small but critical changes that are resulting from this revitalization process. We have also begun to see more transparency and accountability on the part of the President of the General Assembly and the Office of the President. Such steps serve to enhance the integrity of the General Assembly. We have also seen an improvement in the conduct of meetings, with better management of time and services.

We believe that we can improve things even more by looking at the work we do. If we think about the real impact of the resolutions we adopt, the sad reality is that many are not properly implemented. We believe that we should consider the reasons why resolutions with actionable mandates are not executed, as well as the fact that it is quality, not just quantity, that determines success. That goes hand in hand with the bigger and more complex area of the revitalization process that we have only just begun to deal with — aligning the work of the Assembly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The General Assembly can become more effective if we enhance coherence among the Committees of the General Assembly as well as between the work of the Assembly itself and that of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. While each has its own mandates and specific agendas, we have

recognized the linkages between issues and agreed on the need for a holistic approach. That is the idea behind the interlinkages within the Sustainable Development Goals — that economic progress, social prosperity and the protection of the environment are linked; peace and development are linked; and the realization of human rights is important for achieving meaningful development. We must also ensure that the funds and programmes under the Economic and Social Council, the regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies work towards common milestones and strategic goals.

We must continue the work already begun. We must analyse the gaps, overlaps and duplications, if any, and ensure that we not only have all aspects covered, but that this is done in a manner that will benefit the process the most. We cannot think of revitalization in silos. In order for this to work, we must honestly review every part of our Organization, because the fast-changing global context demands that we keep abreast or be seen as no longer relevant.

In considering the improvement of our work here in the General Assembly, we must ensure that every Member State in this Hall has an equal opportunity to contribute and be represented. The principle of equity must be the cornerstone of our work. The Maldives believes in the promise of the United Nations and in the beauty of multilateralism. We are making strides, but we can and should do more. We should do all we can to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization, so that what we do here makes a real impact at home, in our countries. We can and should examine the various ways and means by which we, the international community, can make a difference and play a part in crafting shared solutions for our shared common destiny.

Ms. Velichko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): All protocol observed. That way of addressing such aspects of protocol is one of the latest innovations in the list of agreements that resulted from the most recent session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, and Belarus would like to see it entrenched.

Belarus aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Belarus welcomes the appointment of Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, as co-Chair of the

Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We firmly believe that Ms. Mejía Vélez, together with Mr. Vladimir Drobnyak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, will give new impetus to the Group's work, and we wish them every success.

At the end of the Assembly's previous session, we agreed to improve the mechanism for dialogue between the Permanent Missions of Member States and the Secretariat, and we look forward to seeing that idea implemented in practice. We believe that regular thematic events based on that process will help to reduce the technical burden on Member States in their interactions with the Secretariat and give them timely information on the Secretariat's planning of initiatives designed to streamline its work. That will help build a system of predictable and trustworthy interactions that is convenient for Member States as well as the Secretariat. We would like to note that some positive moves have already been made in that process, with the Secretariat beginning to consult with missions when it is taking decisions that will affect them. We also commend the efficient response of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to States' requests and Under-Secretary-General Pollard's personal involvement in those efforts. The initiative of the Department of Management in piloting a one-stop-shopping option deserves special mention, and the opportunity for States to comment on the mechanism as it is being developed increases our optimism about its potential success.

We are also eagerly awaiting the roll-out in 2018 of a new version of the *Journal of the United Nations*, with reorganized content and a user-friendly digital interface. Member States have been asking to see this unique record of all the work that takes place within the United Nations improved, made responsive to the requirements of a modern digital society and published in all six official languages of the United Nations for a long time. We hope that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will follow the example of the Department of Management and give missions the opportunity to take part in the work of developing this new product. We believe that only by combining the efforts of Member States and the Secretariat will we be able to create a truly user-friendly yet informative *Journal of the United Nations*.

Today, when we have finished considering this agenda item, the impending election of five members

of the International Court of Justice should be another opportunity to demonstrate our successful implementation of ways to improve United Nations election campaigns, based on last year's decision to introduce a new format for ballots and limit the distribution in the General Assembly Hall of campaign materials about candidates, including souvenirs. These changes will unquestionably help Member States to stay within the bounds of protocol and avoid confusion in filling out ballots, which should have a positive effect on the outcome of elections. The next step in that process, as provided for in resolution 71/323, is defining the concept and scope of a code of conduct regulating Member States' conduct of election campaigns, with a view to improving their transparency, accountability and fairness.

In conclusion, we would like to note that the effectiveness of the General Assembly's decision-making depends directly on its ability to respond promptly to today's challenges and threats. For that, we need a competent, relevant agenda rather than the one we actually possess, which was adopted more than 70 years ago and has not been seriously revised since, while the number of items on it has ballooned. The current agenda includes items that have long ago lost their relevance and are simply bumped automatically from session to session with no discussion. In that regard, Belarus would like to propose that at its next meeting, the Ad Hoc Working Group consider streamlining the General Assembly's agenda by reducing the number of items on it. That will save resources and time and improve the effectiveness of the Assembly's decision-making and our confidence in it.

Ms. Krisnamurthi (Indonesia): Indonesia would first like to convey its deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of the powerful earthquakes that struck the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Costa Rica this weekend, as well as to the Governments and peoples of those countries, and wishes the injured a speedy recovery.

While observing all protocol and congratulating the incoming co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, as well as assuring them of our full cooperation and support, Indonesia reiterates that it will continue to contribute actively to revitalizing the Assembly.

Indonesia associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Algeria, on behalf

of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Our shared global challenges require a comprehensive and collaborative response. There is no better platform for that than the General Assembly, which has the necessary scope and is unique in representing all Member States and in its ability to harness their support. Given the deep connection between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the concept of sustaining peace, the Assembly has a critical role in advancing those two agendas in a coherent and effective manner. That is why we believe that the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group should also be linked to other reform efforts — such as reform of the Security Council and the alignment exercise aimed at enhancing synergy between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — in order to further the 2030 Agenda, the restructuring of the peace and security architecture and other United Nations reforms in the area of management.

Global peace and stability will be best addressed when the three pillars of peace and security, development and human rights are acting in unison and are firmly supported by everyone. Indonesia is pleased that the trends in the Assembly's functions have generally been upward and positive, particularly since the adoption of resolution 69/321. It is vital to ensure that this momentum is sustained. Both inside and outside the Ad Hoc Working Group, Member States should work together to ensure that the provisions of resolution 69/321, and other resolutions on the issue of revitalizing the Assembly, are implemented. Indonesia will present its views on the four clusters in detail when the Ad Hoc Working Group convenes specific thematic debates. For now, we will mention a few additional points.

First, while we very much welcomed the improvements to the selection and appointment process for the ninth Secretary-General, we must involve Member States more meaningfully in future. In that context, it is important to ensure that the best practices and lessons learned from that experience are documented while they are fresh in our memories. That will make a good reference point for the doubtless many new diplomats who will have joined the United Nations by the time the next selection process takes place.

Secondly, Indonesia fully supports the expansion of constructive dialogue among countries to facilitate

international peace and welfare. However, as was alluded to in resolution 71/323, we should rationalize the number of high-level events. The focus should be more on genuinely meeting our commitments so as to achieve concrete results on the ground. We also agree that the Secretary-General should be requested to inform the membership about any constraints that prevent the Secretariat from implementing any provisions of the resolutions on revitalization.

Thirdly, it is vital to improve the working methods of the Main Committees, the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies by instituting good practices such as streamlining resolutions and meetings, communicating the names of candidates for election in advance, instituting a code of conduct for election campaigns and ensuring timely handovers between outgoing and incoming officials.

Fourthly, as the role of the Office of the President of the General Assembly in dealing with international issues is growing, it should be receiving corresponding support, including through the ongoing practice of seconding personnel from Permanent Missions. We also see merit in beginning the President's term one week earlier so that the President can better prepare for the high-level debates.

Finally, in the selection of United Nations executive heads and the appointment of other senior positions at Headquarters and in the field, we stress the importance of fielding well-qualified, merit-based candidates, ensuring a gender balance and broad geographic distribution, particularly from countries whose nationals are underrepresented, including small islands and developing and least developed countries. Countries that have a proven track record in contributing to the United Nations, including police- and troop-contributing countries, should also be represented in the Secretariat. No country or group of countries should have a monopoly or disproportionate number of nationals among the United Nations senior staff. Let us together enable the General Assembly to perform its role fully. For its part, Indonesia will work tirelessly in the Ad Hoc Working Group and other forums to contribute to and support steps that meaningfully strengthen the Assembly and its mechanisms.

Mr. Teo (Singapore): I would first like to convey our deepest sympathies to the Governments and peoples of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq for the earthquake that struck this weekend, sadly claiming

the lives of many and causing widespread destruction. We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the survivors and their families, and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

I would like to thank the President for convening this debate early in his presidency and giving priority to the issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. I join previous speakers in congratulating the Ambassadors of Croatia and Colombia on their appointments as the new co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We are confident that they will continue to lead the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group in an inclusive, transparent and efficient manner, and that we will make further progress under their leadership.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is an important issue for many States, including my own. As a small State, Singapore has been a strong supporter of a more efficient, effective and accountable United Nations and General Assembly. Our work here must reinforce the Assembly's role and authority, and we have consistently championed its revitalization. Over the years, the work of the General Assembly has undoubtedly increased, not simply in volume, but also in scope and depth. Its revitalization is therefore crucial to ensuring that it keeps abreast of the challenges of the day and is able to discharge its responsibilities as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

In the midst of the slow and difficult negotiations elsewhere in the United Nations, the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group has stood out as a lodestar of progress. Over the past three years, we have adopted by consensus three milestone resolutions that collectively serve to strengthen the authority and credibility of the General Assembly and the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We have made further progress this year under the able leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and the United Arab Emirates, and I take this opportunity to congratulate them. The decisions taken this year have led to quick and practical improvements on the ground. For example, we now have clearly printed ballot papers with new guidelines on the distribution of campaign materials on election day, improving the election process in the General Assembly. Thanks to those improved procedures, none of the votes cast in the recent Human Rights Council elections were invalid. For my delegation, that was a

visible demonstration of how the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group can make a positive impact on our work here in the General Assembly. We also welcome the other improvements that have resulted from decisions adopted in resolution 71/323, including many of our proposals, such as the instituting of handover meetings between the outgoing and incoming teams of the Chairs of the Main Committees. Such decisions will help to improve the efficiency, complementarity and transparency of the work of the General Assembly for the benefit of all, particularly small States.

While the progress achieved over the past few years is commendable, we must not rest on our laurels. It is important for us to build on that positive momentum, and continue our efforts to improve the work of the General Assembly and its processes on a basis of consensus. First, we must build on the improvements that we have made in the working methods of the Assembly, notably the election process. In that regard, we look forward to formulating a code of conduct to guide the conduct of Member States during election campaigns. Our overriding goal is to ensure that current election campaign practices at the United Nations do not inadvertently lead to spiraling costs as each competing delegation tries to outdo other campaigns, which puts smaller developing countries at a disadvantage. Campaigns should ideally focus on the quality of the candidates and their ability to contribute to the work of the body in which they are seeking membership, not on gifts or lavish receptions.

Secondly, improvements in the selection and appointment process of United Nations officials must not stop with the appointment of the Secretary-General but should extend to all other senior appointments within the Organization. We call on the Secretary-General to make appointments based on merit, while taking into account gender and geographical balance and also ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. There should be no monopoly on senior posts in the United Nations system by nationals of any State or group of countries.

Thirdly, we must continue our efforts to ensure that the work of the General Assembly is fit for purpose. Our priority is to ensure that the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, and of the Economic and Social Council, work coherently to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is important for many developing countries. We therefore look forward to

working with the President, as a member both of the General Committee and an interested delegation, in developing practical proposals aimed at addressing gaps and duplication in the agenda of the General Assembly as they relate to the 2030 Agenda.

We have made some suggestions aimed at increasing the progress already being made in the Ad Hoc Working Group. My delegation will work with the President, as well as the new co-Chairs and other delegations, in our joint endeavour to further enhance the transparency, accountability, efficiency and legitimacy of the General Assembly.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): At the outset, I want to say that our delegation is deeply grieved by the news of the earthquake that struck the region bordering the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq. We would like to offer our deepest condolences to the bereaved and to express our heartfelt sympathies to all of the people who have been affected.

I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting. I would also like to express my appreciation for the President's statement at the opening of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.3), in which he clearly defined the importance of the revitalization process and showed his intention to further promote that process in the context of reform of the United Nations.

Concerning the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, Japan welcomed the adoption of resolution 71/323. Our delegation would like to express its sincere gratitude to Ambassadors Drobnjak of Croatia and Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates for their hard work and skilful chairship of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Drobnjak and the appointment of Ambassador Mejía Vélez as co-Chairs of the Working Group during the current session, and are looking forward to collaborating closely with them.

With regard to the implementation of United Nations resolutions, our delegation would like to emphasize that the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, including those related to revitalization, is critical to enhancing the Assembly's efficiency and effectiveness, and we also underline that it is Member States' responsibility to implement them. We have been pleased to see several examples of the implementation of resolution 71/323 already. Rule 92 of the Assembly's

rules of procedure was amended in accordance with paragraph 46 of the resolution. On 16 October, the first election — of candidates for the Human Rights Council — was conducted with the new method of filling out ballot papers. On election day in the Hall, a single page of information about the candidates was distributed to the desk of every delegation, in accordance with the resolution. Each of those instances represents an important step in the implementation of resolution 71/323.

Our delegation believes that in promoting the revitalization of the General Assembly and strengthening its constituent roles, the Office of the President of the General Assembly plays a critical part. We should continue to encourage the Office to maintain its transparency and effectiveness. Given the fact that the activities of the President of the General Assembly have increased substantially in recent years, adequate resources should be allocated to the Office to provide the support that it needs to carry them out successfully. In that regard, Japan will provide a voluntary contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund in support of the Office. The President of the Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, clearly expressed his intention to include peace, prevention and the avoidance of conflict, the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change as his priorities. Japan shares those priorities, and is willing to assist the President in exercising his leadership to address those difficult issues throughout the world.

In the course of the seventy-second session, it will be important to continue the discussions on revitalizing the Assembly. In particular, working methods will be another essential part of those discussions. Japan has been very active in improving working methods within the United Nations. For example, resolution 68/307 moved the election dates for the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council from October to June. In order to take full advantage of that change, which is intended to give new members more time to prepare for their membership, Japan, as Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, proposed that the Informal Working Group revisit the transitional arrangements for newly elected members of the Council. In July 2016, following intensive consultations, the Security Council adopted a new presidential note, contained in document S/2016/619. With that new agreement, the newly elected members

are now invited to observe Council meetings starting on 1 October. The note also includes improvements to transparency and inclusivity in the selection process for the Chairs of subsidiary organs, as well as measures to facilitate early preparation by the Chairs.

Following up on the open debate on the working methods of the Security Council (see S/PV.7740) that was held during our presidency of the Security Council in July 2016, Japan has initiated discussions in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to identify areas for further improvements to the Council's working methods, including increasing the Council's interaction with the wider membership of the United Nations. On 30 August, the Security Council agreed on a comprehensive new presidential note on its working methods (S/2017/507), which consolidates and streamlines all the existing presidential notes and lays out some new measures. Japan is eager to continue contributing to improving the working methods of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

The issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is also an urgent challenge. The current consideration of the possibility of the biennialization or triennialization of agenda items should continue, as has been done in the past few years, and we again look forward to working with Member States on that issue during the current session.

Just as we moved the elections to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to earlier dates through our adoption of resolution 68/307, we might also consider holding the elections for the presidency of the General Assembly earlier, so that the President-elect is afforded sufficient time to set up his or her team and prepare for the handover. Our delegation proposed that point at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group last year. We believe that this idea is in line with suggestions that have been made by several Chairs of the Main Committees, stressing the importance of holding elections earlier in the interest of ensuring smooth transitions.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that Japan stands ready to support the President of the General Assembly and contribute constructively to the discussions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, with the aim of further enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the United Nations.

Mr. Prasad (India): India would first like to express its sympathies to the families of the victims of the earthquakes that took place over the weekend. We sincerely regret the loss of life.

At the outset, I align myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would like to thank the President for convening today's important meeting. I congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Colombia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and wish them success in their endeavours. The co-Chairs for the seventy-first session also deserve our thanks for their excellent work.

Any institution's effectiveness, relevance and longevity depend on its dynamic character and its ability to adapt to changing times so that it not only upholds timeless values but also addresses the emerging problems and challenges of the present day. The General Assembly is the most representative global body that the collective enterprise and wisdom of humankind has established to date. Its primacy flows from the universality of its membership and the principle of the sovereign equality of all of its members. It cannot be compared to any other organization or institution within or outside the United Nations system, owing to its sheer representativeness and the moral weight of its decisions and opinions. However, there is a widespread feeling that the Assembly has been prevented from living up to its unique role, as set out in Article 10 of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, over the past years, it has lost touch with its core responsibilities and is increasingly involved solely with processes.

The role and authority of the General Assembly have been gradually undermined by the expansive role and activism of the Security Council. We must admit that part of the blame lies with the General Assembly itself, which has allowed itself to be undermined and encroached on, despite representing the collective voice of humankind. That is counterproductive for the overall effectiveness and relevance of the United Nations.

We firmly believe that the position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as mandated by the Charter, must be restored and respected in letter and in spirit. The Assembly must lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the

United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to addressing emerging challenges and resolving transnational issues. The leading role played by the General Assembly at the Sustainable Development Summit in 2015, followed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the success of this year's Ocean Conference, are shining recent examples of how the Assembly can set the global agenda and lead the way in addressing issues and concerns of a global nature. It is therefore incumbent on us, the Member States, to ensure that it maintains its leadership role on issues of transnational importance.

The process of revitalizing the General Assembly is an urgent task. In the past few years it has brought about significant improvements aimed at meeting the increasingly complex demands of our rapidly changing world. Some of the positive outcomes that have been widely acknowledged were evident during the 2016 selection of the Secretary-General and in the recent efforts to strengthen the Office of the President of the General Assembly. My delegation engaged actively in the debate on improving the process and conduct of elections that led to the adoption of resolution 71/323. Among other things, we have also furthered the cause of multilingualism at the United Nations and helped to facilitate better cooperation between Member States and the Secretariat. Although the progress we are making is encouraging, we have a long way to go. My delegation will continue to make additional concrete proposals on further revitalizing the General Assembly

and to work actively for that broader purpose with other delegations.

The revitalization of the General Assembly must also be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the United Nations. Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has come a long way. However, its continued relevance and effectiveness in addressing emerging global challenges will depend largely on its ability to stay abreast of changing times and realities. The winds of change are blowing. The issue of United Nations reform, including the revitalization of the Assembly and reform of the Security Council, is assuming increasing significance. We must heed the call for United Nations reform made by many world leaders during the general debate at the beginning of the Assembly's seventy-second session. It is our firm belief that urgent and comprehensive reform is needed if we are to ensure that the Organization reflects current geopolitical realities and to enhance its capability to meet the increasingly complex and pressing transnational challenges of our times.

The time for change has come. Let us make genuine efforts to strengthen the role of the General Assembly in setting the global agenda, policymaking and finding solutions to global challenges and problems, which will help to strengthen the legitimacy of the United Nations and of multilateralism as a whole. The General Assembly can count on my delegation's constructive support and participation in those efforts.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.