



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

**45**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Muhammad-Bande ..... (Nigeria)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 128

### Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him

#### Draft resolution (A/74/L.20)

**The Acting President:** I should like to inform members that action on the draft resolution is postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on the draft resolution as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.20.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): I am pleased to introduce today, on behalf of all the co-sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/74/L.20, concerning the investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and the members of the party accompanying him. We are grateful to all the delegations that have joined us in this endeavour, and I would like to thank all the co-sponsors, of which there are now more than 100, for their support.

Since 2015, Chief Justice Mohamed Chande Othman has overseen major progress in the investigation, first as Head of the Independent Panel of Experts and, thereafter, as the Secretary-General's Eminent Person. His latest report (see A/73/973), issued in early September, is substantial and presents valuable new information. We express our sincere gratitude to the Eminent Person and his team for their dedicated work.

We also thank all Member States that have collaborated with and contributed to the investigation, particularly those that have appointed national investigators to conduct dedicated reviews of national archives to determine whether additional relevant information exists, as well as the Secretary-General and our colleagues at the Secretariat, who have worked to ensure that the United Nations has reviewed its own specific records and archives for declassification of information relevant to the case.

In his latest report, the Eminent Person concludes that it remains plausible that an external attack or threat was a cause of the crash. There are specific matters that warrant further follow-up. In that light and in firm support of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the way forward, Sweden, together with its partners, is introducing the draft resolution before the Assembly today. The draft resolution has six operative paragraphs, the most important of which are paragraphs 1, 3 and 4.

Paragraph 1 requests the Secretary-General to reappoint the Eminent Person to continue his work. This extensive investigation benefits immensely from continuity, and we firmly believe that no one is better

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placed than Chief Justice Othman to continue and conclude the investigation. Much work has already been done. We therefore believe that it will be possible to conclude the investigation during the next extended mandate. As such, we request the Eminent Person to draw conclusions from the investigation by the end of the seventy-fifth session.

However, that requires the full cooperation of Member States. Paragraph 3 therefore specifically requests those Member States referred to in the report to cooperate with and assist the Eminent Person fully, including by appointing without delay independent and high-ranking officials to conduct a dedicated internal review of their security, intelligence and defence archives to determine whether relevant information exists. It also encourages the Eminent Person to remain engaged with all high-ranking officials, including those who have concluded their work, in order to draw upon their expertise on the matter.

In his report, the Eminent Person recognizes that both Member States and individuals have contributed through sharing expertise and information. Therefore, paragraph 4 calls upon Member States to encourage individuals and private entities to ensure that any relevant records related to the death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him be made available for review by the Eminent Person.

We trust that, as in previous years, the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote. We count on the full cooperation of all Member States in its implementation. It is our shared responsibility to pursue the full truth in this matter.

Since the draft resolution has minor programme budget implications, as the President mentioned, its adoption will be proposed once the Fifth Committee has considered the matter later this month. In the meantime, the list of co-sponsors will remain open. We encourage all Member States to join us. We once again thank our partners for their support.

The United Nations and all its States Members must continue to do everything possible to ascertain what happened to Flight SE-BDY, the *Albertina*. We owe it to the families of those who perished 58 years ago, and we owe it to the United Nations as an Organization.

I would like to conclude on a personal note. This is my last appearance in the General Assembly in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Sweden. I

am particularly pleased that today's topic happened to be about Dag Hammarskjöld. Sweden is immensely proud of Dag Hammarskjöld and the work he did as Secretary-General of the United Nations. He was a man who believed strongly in the equal rights of nations, large and small. He was a champion of peace, with an extraordinary sense of duty and vision. He was a spiritual man with great integrity. He had faith in people and in this Organization. To honour his legacy, I hope we can renew our commitment to multilateralism and further strengthening the United Nations.

**The Acting President:** As that was Ambassador Skoog's last statement to the General Assembly, we wish him continued success in his endeavours.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 128.

## Agenda item 15

### Culture of peace

#### Reports of the Secretary-General (A/74/195 and A/74/476)

#### Draft resolutions (A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25)

**The Acting President:** I should like to inform the Assembly that draft resolution A/74/L.24 is also submitted under agenda item 11, "Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.23.

**Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh): It gives me great pleasure to deliver my maiden statement to the General Assembly as the new Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, all the more so as it is on the agenda item "Culture of peace". It was 20 years ago that, as a young representative, I had the privilege of being part of the core team that introduced this agenda item at the Assembly, leading to the adoption of the groundbreaking resolution 53/243. There could not be a more auspicious start to my second innings at the United Nations.

On 13 September 1999, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 53/243 (see A/53/PV.107), on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Through that seminal resolution, Member States agreed on a programme of action to

promote a culture of peace in eight important areas that are individually significant and mutually reinforcing.

That was during the first term of the Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Since then, Bangladesh has facilitated this resolution at the Assembly every year. The culture of peace is an integral part of our national agenda for people-centred development, as enshrined in Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 of Prime Minister Hasina's development road map. We are very pleased to see the inclusion of the culture of peace in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a recognition of the mutually reinforcing role of peace and development.<sup>[15]</sup> As the original proponent of the culture of peace at the United Nations, Bangladesh is pleased to see that the concept has grown in prominence and has been found to be relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges across the three pillars of the United Nations. The growing interest in the concept is manifest in the range of draft resolutions being proposed under this agenda item over the years. In recent years, we have seen a surge in peace and preventive diplomacy, as actively promoted by the Secretary-General. The culture of peace can serve as a critical enabler in that regard.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action. On that occasion, the President of the General Assembly convened a high-level forum on a culture of peace on the theme "The culture of peace: empowering and transforming humanity". It recognized the enduring value of the culture of peace for the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At that meeting, there was also broad agreement for more inclusive collaborations and partnerships among Member States, United Nations entities, international organizations, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders for the effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action. Given that the cross-cutting concept of a culture of peace has evolved into a dominant theme in our discourse at the United Nations, there is clearly a need to further strengthen efforts at all levels to operationalize it through specific plans and programmes.

I believe that the coming year will provide us with an excellent opportunity to do so. Next year we will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. There are two other landmark anniversaries

also coming up in 2020 — the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Those occasions will provide us with the perfect opportunity to push the frontier further in promoting a culture of peace in all areas of our work, especially in enhancing women's participation in ensuring peace and security and their critical role in achieving sustainable development, as envisioned in the women and peace and security and Beijing outcomes.

I wish to take this opportunity to place on record our deep appreciation to all Member States and United Nations agencies that have actively supported the culture of peace process over the past two decades. On that note, I wish to call upon the United Nations entities concerned, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UN-Women, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the University for Peace, to continue to remain engaged, within their respective mandates, in integrating the culture of peace in their core areas of work. We wish to work with everyone involved in making that happen.

I now have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace", as contained in document A/74/L.23. The large number of its co-sponsors and its adoption by consensus each year attests to the support that the resolution enjoys and its growing relevance to Member States. We sincerely thank all delegations for their active and constructive participation in the informal consultations on the draft resolution once again this year. We also appreciate their valuable inputs, which have enriched the draft. Besides technical updates, the draft resolution this year includes the following other updates.

First, the draft resolution welcomes the successful holding, on 13 September, of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, on the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, convened by the President of the General Assembly. We also need to make some editorial corrections to the twenty-first preambular paragraph and to paragraph 17 to reflect the correct title of the Forum.

Secondly, the draft resolution notes with appreciation that the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace continues to find relevance across the three pillars of the United Nations, which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as

corroborated by the introduction of a new resolutions under this agenda item in recent years.

Thirdly, the draft resolution appreciates that the Forum provided an opportunity for Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and non-governmental organizations and all relevant stakeholders to exchange ideas and make suggestions on how to build on and further promote the culture of peace in the twenty-first century, and acknowledged that the theme of the Forum, “The Culture of Peace: empowering and transforming humanity”, reflected the enduring value of the culture of peace for, inter alia, the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Fourthly, while recognizing the ongoing activities of UNESCO related to the culture of peace and non-violence and their focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels, the draft resolution also notes its support for Member States in promoting the culture of peace at the national level.

We sincerely thank those delegations that have already co-sponsored the draft resolution — I believe there are 111 delegations, the highest to date — which reflects the broad-based support for this draft resolution. We look forward to more delegations joining as co-sponsors from the floor shortly, ahead of its proposed adoption by consensus.

As we adopt various resolutions today under the culture of peace agenda, we do so in the sobering awareness that our world is still plagued by conflict and various forms of injustice, discrimination, cruelty and inhumane acts, as well as crimes against humanity. We have the responsibility, as members of the international community, to protect the oppressed and end the culture of impunity by ensuring accountability and justice. That should be our solemn pledge as we renew our commitment to a culture of peace today.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.24.

**Mr. Margaryan (Armenia):** I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/74/L.24, entitled “World Chess Day”, which proposes to designate 20 July as World Chess Day, to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.

One of the oldest and most popular mental games in history, chess is an established part of our modern-day culture as a unique combination of sport, scientific thinking and art. The draft resolution reflects the transformative power of chess in helping to transcend national boundaries, break down racial, political and social barriers, change perceptions and prejudices, combat discrimination and defuse conflict. As a global game that promotes fairness and mutual respect, chess can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among nations by building more bridges and bringing more people together.

The draft resolution recognizes the important opportunities offered by chess in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the strengthening of education and health, promoting the empowerment of women and girls and fostering solidarity, cooperation and peace in its capacity as an affordable and inclusive activity.

In Armenia chess is regarded as an essential part of our culture. The long-standing tradition of chess has earned our country, with a population of 3 million people, the titles of Olympic and world champions. Armenia has one of the highest numbers of chess grandmasters per capita in the world today. Having embraced chess as an academic subject in schools, Armenia recognizes that one of the most important and enduring lessons that chess can offer is respect — respect for rules, players and discipline, and also respect for the continuous quest for progress based on effort and decency. Skill is the ultimate value on the chessboard, not the origin or background of the player.

Armenia is grateful to all the delegations that participated in the informal consultation process on the draft resolution for their constructive engagement. We thank the co-sponsors for supporting the designation of World Chess Day as a global platform to foster dialogue, solidarity and a culture of peace. While chess originated as a game that modelled a battlefield, today we have come to think of chess as a game that is more closely linked with peace, and the concept of a chessboard is often linked with diplomacy and multilateralism.

The designation of World Chess Day by the General Assembly provides an important opportunity to recommit to the intrinsic values that the United Nations and the International Chess Federations share. As reflected in FIDE’s motto, *gens una sumus*, we are one

family. As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, World Chess Day can stand as an important platform to celebrate those shared values and to put them at the service of humankind.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.25.

**Mrs. Azucena** (Philippines): On behalf of Pakistan and my own country, the Philippines, I am honoured to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.25, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”. The draft resolution has been co-sponsored by friends and partners in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Americas and Europe. We thank them all for their engagement.

The Philippines and Pakistan endeavoured to accommodate all the views and concerns put forward, thereby advancing the objectives of the that resolution that we have co-sponsored for 15 consecutive years. Certain things cannot be taken back: an arrow shot from a bow, a bullet fired from a gun and an ill word spoken. Not even apology can close the wound. Therefore, even when we talk, we must be circumspect — all the more so when we bear arms.

The world today faces seemingly intractable conflicts and complex challenges that cause immense human suffering and economic loss and hinder greater socioeconomic cooperation to repair the damage. We have witnessed growing xenophobia and religious intolerance, underpinned by the politics of identity, as well as the emergence of extremist ideologies. Suspicion and ignorance among various religions and civilizations are being exploited — and indeed propagated — by extremist groups to pursue their agenda of establishing a terrorized society. There was a time when terror was the weapon of the weak against the strong in struggles for freedom and justice. Today terror is pursued for itself and is not a means but the very end that terrorism seeks — a society built on fear in which every person is afraid of the others.

Against that backdrop, this annual draft resolution becomes more relevant than ever. It has two objectives: to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue to achieve peace and stability, and to strengthen mechanisms that promise constructive dialogue across the most divergent divides. We worked to advance the objectives of the draft resolution by maintaining an

open, inclusive and transparent approach throughout the negotiation process.

An example of that approach is provided in paragraph 9, which welcomes the landmark initiative to open up the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor and appreciates the agreement between Pakistan and India, which was reached in record time. The draft resolution also recognizes the important role of UNESCO and the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue at all levels.

Negotiations can be difficult at times, but only because we, as Member States, approach one idea from our own unique perspectives. But the process was inspired at all times by our shared ideal of promoting a culture of peace, which helped us reach agreement. We are grateful for the openness and flexibility demonstrated by delegations. We hope that our efforts will be met with approval by the Assembly.

There should be no doubt in our solidarity as the United Nations to embrace a culture of peace, partnership and inclusivity. On behalf of the Permanent Missions of Pakistan and the Philippines, I humbly request that all Member States adopt by consensus draft resolution A/74/L.25, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

**Mr. Condor** (Saint Kitts and Nevis): On behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I have the honour to deliver this statement on agenda item 15, “Culture of peace”. At the outset, CARICOM wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/74/476), which provides an overview of the activities that have been carried out by the main United Nations entities working to promote a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace since the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolutions 73/126 and 73/129, and which was prepared to guide our consideration of this agenda item.

CARICOM commends UNESCO for strengthening efforts to mobilize all relevant stakeholders within and outside the United Nations system in support of a culture of peace and for inviting the Organization to continue to enhance communication and outreach, including through the culture of peace website.

CARICOM recognizes the importance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 53/243, of 13 September 1999, which serves as the universal mandate of the international community, especially the United Nations system, with respect to the application of the principles and rules of international law for the benefit of humankind, in particular future generations.

We live in an era of increasing globalization and deepening interdependence. As CARICOM itself is the essence of cultural diversity, we recognize the importance of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue. CARICOM believes that the peaceful resolution of conflicts and differences is crucial to social and economic development, security and stability.

In addition, disparities among and within countries remain a global concern. Poverty and social and economic inequality have persisted, causing growing resentment and intolerance. CARICOM believes that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will need to address the increasing inequalities among countries and ensure that globalization benefits all countries, and not just a selected few.

Consistent with its obligations as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations should be a force for equality and fairness in the context of an inequitable system of globalization. The United Nations must work to ensure that rules apply equally, effectively and consistently to all the actors in our global family.

CARICOM recognizes the important role of women and young people, as well as the contribution of children and older persons, in advancing a culture of peace. In our region, the Caribbean Youth Advocacy and Action Agenda on Violence Prevention is a call to action to effectively address the issues that young people across the Caribbean have identified in relation to crime and violence, including preventing and reducing crime, fostering social inclusion and promoting reintegration.

In the words of Haile Selassie,

“[t]hroughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph.”

CARICOM shares the view of the Secretary-General that the world is at a critical juncture, and it is vital to continue to scale up efforts towards achieving a culture of peace and attaining the vision set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda. The time for action is now.

**Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand.

I would like to begin by thanking the President for convening today’s debate. It comes at a crucial moment this year, as the international community recently completed the first four-year cycle of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To that end, ASEAN reaffirms our strong determination to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in a more accelerated and effective manner, in the knowledge that the enduring value of the culture of peace is critical to that vision.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/74/195 and A/74/476) under this agenda item. ASEAN reiterates its support for United Nations efforts to make the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, with a focus on prevention, increasingly the business of the entire United Nations system.

When ASEAN was founded, 52 years ago, against the backdrop of the numerous challenges facing our countries, our vision was simple: to have an integrated, peaceful and stable community that enjoys co-prosperity and realizes lasting peace and stability in the region. ASEAN continues to further advance that vision today by promoting peaceful dialogue and mediation, without resorting to the threat of use or use of force for any of our decisions. Our decision-making process has also been carried out in a truly ASEAN fashion — the ASEAN way — that is, with the consensus of all 10 member States. The ASEAN way, which is a hallmark of our organization, has worked for the betterment of the peace and stability of the region.

ASEAN has also carried out the same process, together with its dialogue partners, in ensuring peace and stability within the region and beyond its borders.

The promotion of a culture of peace and prevention that educates and empowers people, detects and prevents armed conflicts and sustains peace through a cross-sectoral, comprehensive and integrated approach is what our region strives for.

ASEAN shares with all Member States the aspiration and deep sense of collective responsibility to achieve a world at peace through mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance, reconciliation and respect for the rule of law. We recognize the need to continue to build on our shared values and shared aspirations by strengthening mechanisms and actions through constructive dialogue, better understanding, inclusiveness and moderation in order to realize a global culture of peace.

ASEAN continues to engage in meaningful dialogue with our external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures under the ASEAN Regional Forum, and through other constructive engagement. We believe that advancing the habit of dialogue is imperative in creating a conducive atmosphere aimed at having a better understanding of each other's views on the situation in the region.

We also support the Security Council women and peace and security and youth and peace and security agendas, as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives for the active participation of women and young people that foster a culture of peace, such as the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme. In addition, we believe that the promotion of cooperation on sustainable development also helps to foster a culture of peace.

ASEAN believes that cultivating such a culture of peace is deeply rooted in respect for the rule of international law and its guiding principles. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to continuing to foster peace and to maintain stability and security. ASEAN stands ready to work with the international community and the United Nations towards upholding peace and stability, as enshrined in both the ASEAN Charter and the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Ron Martínez** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in the annual debate on the agenda item "Culture of peace", since the promotion and strengthening of peace are a topic of great importance to our country. We are aware of the urgent need to make further progress in achieving the principles and values of coexistence, tolerance,

respect for diversity and non-violence, particularly at a time when the world is under the constant threat of war and multilateralism is facing a significant crisis due to a growing trend towards unilateralism.

In that context, we would like to begin our statement by reaffirming the importance of redoubling our efforts to strengthen the culture of peace by promoting political understanding and constructive dialogue among States on the basis of mutual respect and in strict adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the rule of international law, the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the right to self-determination of peoples, non-violence, diplomacy for peace and the full realization of all human rights, including the right to development.

At the same time, we welcome and appreciate the presentation of draft resolutions A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25, to be considered at this meeting, all of which we have co-sponsored, concerning the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, World Chess Day and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We commend the delegations of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Armenia and the Philippines for their respective initiatives to continue strengthening the values of coexistence and spaces for dialogue, which are key to building a world where a culture of peace is a reality.

The building and strengthening of a culture of peace requires the genuine commitment of all of us, as responsible members of the international community, which must transcend occasional speeches and be translated into concrete actions. Safeguarding future generations from the scourge of war and achieving lasting peace will be possible only to the extent that we are able to demonstrate steadfast solidarity with the most vulnerable in our societies, on the basis of respect for cultural integrity and diversity and the ability to understand and accept each other without judgment by recognizing that fairness and justice are essential elements of that equation. That is why, without hesitation we affirm before the General Assembly that a world of peace will be possible only once social justice becomes a reality and equal access to health care, food, housing, education, culture, social security, science, sport and other fundamental rights is ensured based on national and international commitments to cooperation.

Likewise, fostering a culture of peace and its inherent values requires the utmost respect for the dignity of every human being, regardless of nationality, social class, sex, age, ethnic origin, disability, political or religious views or any other conditions. We therefore reject the encouragement of xenophobic campaigns and the manipulation of the issue of migration and refugees for internal political purposes, which seriously undermines the values that have inspired the Organization and the possibility of achieving lasting peace. Only through political will and dialogue among all social actors, without exception and under equal conditions, can we achieve a climate favourable to establishing the necessary conditions for all members of society to feel involved in development and transformation as an integral part of the social contract between States and citizens based on a just, prosperous, democratic and equitable international order.

History has shown that those great aspirations, which sometimes seem too idealistic, can be met with efforts and political will. On many occasions, they have even resulted in major peace agreements between warring groups, programmes of social impact that ensured the social and economic rights of entire peoples, and liberation movements that granted freedom, independence, sovereignty and self-determination to nations under the colonial yoke, among other positive experiences that are a beacon of hope at a time when the political interests of a small number of countries and powerful sectors seem to prevail.

That is clearly not a simple or short-term task but an ongoing one that we, as States and peoples, can advance socially and institutionally with actions of various kinds so as to make real gains through public policies and an inclusive dialogue. To that end, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are an excellent guiding light.

For its part, Venezuela has made major contributions in recent years to the international and regional agendas for multilateralism, cooperation, integration and fostering solidarity, as well as a culture of peace, which have been recognized by various States, social movements, civil society and academia, as well as prominent figures. That is demonstrated through our regional leadership of initiatives for mutual economic cooperation, regional integration and political engagement, as well as our recent role as Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries during

the three-year period from 2016 to 2019, in which we promoted, among other things, the declaration of 24 April as the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace following the adoption of resolution 73/126, presented exactly a year ago to this important body under the same agenda item, "Culture of peace" (see A/73/PV.51).

In keeping with the principles of its Bolivarian peace diplomacy, Venezuela has resolutely and consistently promoted initiatives in support of harmony, cultural diversity, self-determination and peaceful coexistence in order to achieve a pluralistic and multi-centred world, without foreign intervention, as the foundation and guarantee of peace.

In its preamble, the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela states that one of its primary aims is to establish a democratic, participatory, self-reliant, multi-ethnic and multicultural just, federal and decentralized State that embodies the values of freedom, independence, peace, solidarity, the common good, territorial integrity, coexistence and the rule of law for this and future generations. It is therefore a key commitment of our nation to foster a culture of peace as an inherent value of our inclusive democratic system, which recognizes peace as a right and a duty in order to achieve its great aspirations on behalf of humankind.

This debate is therefore a timely occasion to reiterate our rejection and condemnation of the illegal promulgation and implementation of unilateral coercive measures against our country by the Government of the United States of America. Such measures, which violate all norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the human rights of more than a third of humankind, including 30 million Venezuelans, constitute criminal and inhuman collective sanctions that are clearly incompatible with the values of a culture of peace. We demand their immediate repeal and lifting.

To conclude, despite the magnitude of the challenges, Venezuela will remain firm and committed to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and to promoting policies of inclusiveness and dialogue among peoples and nations based on the fundamental principles of coexistence, respect for diversity, dialogue among faiths, cultures and civilizations, with multilateralism as the most appropriate tool for achieving global solutions to the great challenges of the twenty-first century.

These must be addressed jointly rather than through exclusive, supremacist and unilateralist approaches that only favour minorities. The future of humankind and a sustainable planet depends on agreement among discerning men and women and responsible States, overcoming our differences and working resolutely so that the peace for which we yearn today becomes a reality for our sons and daughters.

**Mr. Mohammad** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his reports (A/74/195 and A/74/476), which contain information on topics and actions undertaken by key United Nations entities in order to promote a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, to fight terrorism and violent extremism, and to strengthen efforts towards a more peaceful and tolerant world.

More than ever before, the world today is facing increasingly complex challenges and threats, including challenges that undermine and threaten the dissemination of a culture of peace. Regrettably, disputes and conflicts are sometimes fuelled by intolerance, extremism, violence and religious and ethnic tensions in our world today. Those actions are the result of the rejection of others, intolerance, exclusion and a lack of awareness of the need to coexist. Some have been using violent extremism as a means of expression and even disseminate such incriminating views through social media.

The terrorist act that took place in Christchurch, New Zealand, this year highlights the need for us to make greater efforts to combat the misuse of social media. We also need to work together at the international level to ban content that incites violent extremism and terrorism. We must step up our efforts to transform a culture of hatred, intolerance and war into one of dialogue, coexistence and peace. Among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we would highlight SDG 16, which calls for establishing inclusive and peaceful societies for all. In that context, we reiterate that there can be no sustainable peace without development or development without sustainable peace, as the two phenomena are inextricably linked.

This year's report of the Secretary-General (A/74/195) highlights important tools for the achievement of peace, such as preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, mediation and dialogue. These

tools are also mentioned in the Charter of the United Nations as a peaceful means of finding solutions to conflict, in particular under Chapter VI. Preventive diplomacy, mediation and the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means are fundamental pillars of Kuwait's foreign policy. Strengthening and highlighting those tools has been a priority for the State of Kuwait during its current membership of the Security Council.

During our presidency of the Security Council in June, we held a briefing on conflict prevention and mediation (see S/PV.8546), since we firmly believe in the importance of such tools for maintaining international peace and security. We reiterate the reference in the Secretary-General's report about the role of women and young people in fostering a culture of peace. We wish to highlight that they should be empowered and included in all areas, including in political processes.

A culture of peace is deeply entrenched in my country. One of the articles of the Kuwaiti Constitution explicitly states that peace is the goal of the State. In the State of Kuwait, we have fostered a culture of tolerance, coexistence and interreligious and intercultural dialogue that has marked our society over centuries. The Constitution of the State of Kuwait enshrines those values and concepts in its articles, which guarantee freedom of speech and expression and the right to perform religious rites freely and safely.

In conclusion, we are willing to participate in all regional and international efforts to promote a culture of peace, strengthen the dialogue among civilizations, spread the values of moderation, tolerance and mutual respect and renounce extremism, hatred and violence in all their forms and manifestations. In that regard, we urge all Member States to cooperate and work together through our multilateral system to create a more peaceful and more tolerant world for this and future generations.

**Mr. Alshamsi** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for organizing this important meeting on a culture of peace. We also thank the Secretary-General for his relevant reports (A/74/195 and A/74/476). Allow me today to highlight the efforts of my country to strengthen the culture of peace.

Three months ago, in this very Hall, we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. On that day, my country reaffirmed

that a culture of peace must begin in every country. For example, the United Arab Emirates has declared 2019 the Year of Tolerance. Following that announcement, His Holiness Pope Francis made a historic visit to Abu Dhabi, which was the first-ever papal visit to the country. During that visit, we signed the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. Following the signing of the document, we decided to build the Abrahamic family house, which will include a church, a mosque and a synagogue in one complex and will be a global and historic model of tolerance.

The United Arab Emirates believes that it is important to engage young people in efforts to achieve stability and address threats to international peace and security. Therefore, next week Abu Dhabi will host a high-level regional conference, entitled “Empowering youth and promoting tolerance”. The conference will be convened jointly by the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism and the Hedayah Centre and seek to strengthen the role of young people in combating extremism. It will also highlight the role of civil society and religious organizations in strengthening dialogue, mutual understanding, tolerance and coexistence.

We also believe that if we wish to achieve stability and coexistence, we cannot overlook the important role of women in supporting the pillars of peace, security and tolerance. We have therefore implemented new initiatives and policies to that end, in line with the Beijing Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Such initiatives include the holding of a series of discussions, in collaboration with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, to review the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction, as well as military training programme for women peacekeepers in cooperation with UN-Women and the Khawla bint Al Azwar Military Academy of the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Defence. Women from the Arab world participated in the first training session, and we are preparing to launch a second session, starting in 2020, in which women from Africa and Asia will take part.

My country believes in the importance of preserving and protecting cultural heritage and religious sites. We therefore welcomed the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, launched in September. The United Arab Emirates was among the countries visited during the consultations that led to the Plan of Action. We are also pleased that the United Arab Emirates was granted permanent membership, with observer status, of

the Council of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. We are the second country in the world, after Italy, to be granted that important status. Given the significant role of the United Arab Emirates and the principles that we seek to promote, we were also recently elected as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO. Through that membership, we will seek to promote tolerance and prosperity by means of various cultural, educational and scientific initiatives.

**Mr. Mohd Nasir** (Maldives): This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 53/243, on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. It was a sign of our collective commitment to a culture of peace that the resolution was adopted by consensus and without reservation. Since then, the General Assembly has adopted annual resolutions, asserting and reaffirming the commitment of Member States to building a culture of peace. Today we are here once again to renew that commitment. The Programme of Action encourages action at all levels — the individual, the family and the community, as well as the national, regional and global levels.

Education is a key element in cultivating and nurturing a culture of peace. In that regard, we commend the work of the United Nations, in particular UNESCO, for the admirable job that it is doing in working with the Governments of Member States to develop and enhance their education systems. Goal 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, inter alia, through education, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence. Globally, we have made considerable progress with regard to education, but the reality is that in 2017, worldwide, there were still 262 million children out of school. We must do better in this area.

Inequality is one of the greatest obstacles to creating a culture of peace. The approach of the Maldives to creating a culture of peace is to provide equitable development across the country and to create a safe and prosperous environment for all. For decades, Maldivians who live in islands outside of the greater Male region have not had the same level of development or access to the same basic resources or even been accorded the same level of priority in policy-making circles. The current Government is committed to implementing a decentralization policy aimed at rectifying that.

The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace is an agreement among States but it rightly identifies Governments, civil society, the media and individuals as key actors for its effective implementation. Nurturing a culture of peace requires the media, including social media platforms, to ensure that free speech not be used as an instrument to incite hate or violence. However, without adequate regulation of social media, in particular to restrict its use to spread populist rhetoric, political extremism, racism, xenophobia and falsehoods, social media has become a convenient vehicle, and at times an enabler, in propagating and exporting such rhetoric across borders and cultures for those who seek to create division within our society. If we do nothing to defeat such forces, our collective investment in building a culture of peace could be very rapidly undone.

The effective and efficient monitoring of social media for malicious activity is therefore paramount. However, in smaller countries, such as the Maldives, the local language is generally used for such malicious activities. It is important that social media companies put in place appropriate mechanisms to adequately monitor local-language content. Consequently, because of the gap in content monitoring, we believe that this also narrows the space for a culture of peace to thrive in societies such as ours. Therefore, we call on social media companies to take more responsibility, especially for monitoring divisive content in such contexts.

History has taught us that peace is not perpetual or unchallenged. As we overcome one challenge, another is on the horizon. The vast majority of peace-loving people cannot afford to let their guard down. Therefore, in this twentieth anniversary year of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, let us, together, with renewed vigour and hope assert and reaffirm our commitment to building a culture of peace.

**Mr. Almabrok** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled “Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/74/476). The report provides an overview of the activities conducted by the bodies of the United Nations to promote a culture of peace. We also wish to thank the co-sponsors of draft resolutions A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25, submitted under this agenda item.

Regrettably, the world is seeing waves of violence accompanied by displacement, death and destruction due to growing violent extremism, terrorism and hatred. Extremism leads to terrorism. If we look at the root causes, there is no doubt that we will find poverty, unemployment, ignorance, discrimination, impunity and marginalization. It is also regrettable to note the flagrant daily human rights violations, of which everyone is aware yet does nothing to counter, as if such violations had become the norm. However, this is a very grave phenomenon. We must strive to find a solution to prevent its recurrence. The international community must increase its efforts and resources. It must find the will and determination necessary to put an end to such practices, adopt bold resolutions and put in place effective mechanisms that promote a culture of peace and tolerance throughout the world.

Commitment to achieving peace strengthens the values of freedom, justice and equality. Peace is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Peace can exist only if there is justice. A culture of peace therefore calls for concerted action on the part of all to fight ideological extremism, such as the exclusion of others and incitement to violence, by enhancing the role of mass media, including the Internet and social media, which have become part of our daily lives and have a huge impact on young people, who are often targeted by extremists and those who spread distorted ideas. In addition, opinion and religious leaders should encourage people to enhance social cohesion. Greater understanding would increase our appreciation of others and strengthen our capacity to combat violence. Ultimately, it will help to build and consolidate a culture of peace.

The essential role played by the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of disputes can be the most effective way to strengthen a culture of peace. In that regard, all Member States must demonstrate the collective will to resolve conflicts and wars and support the right to self-determination without interference in the internal affairs of other States. We believe that all these factors would strengthen the culture of peace, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Respect for cultural and religious diversity throughout the world, together with support for dialogue and mediation over confrontation, are also important tools. Without them, lasting peace for all will remain beyond our reach.

Despite the challenges of today's world, the good offices of the United Nations in achieving peace and security and dealing with complex international issues, which are constantly evolving, remain of great importance. We must therefore support such efforts through the United Nations specialized agencies, particularly UNESCO, whose efforts to promote a culture of peace and tolerance we commend.

In conclusion, we consistently emphasize the need for peaceful dialogue and diplomatic means to identify solutions to conflicts among States. The international community must step up its efforts to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's June initiative to fight hate speech and to strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolutions, while ensuring the necessary human, logistical and technological resources needed to counter terrorism in all its forms.

**Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Peace can be achieved only if it reflects a set of values, attitudes, traditions, behaviours and lifestyles, namely, a culture of peace.

The General Assembly today considers agenda item 15, entitled "Culture of peace", in an international context marked by armed conflicts in various regions, increasing hate, racist and xenophobic speech, including by senior State officials, growing poverty and inequality and an eagerness by some States to close doors and build walls instead of building bridges and fostering understanding among nations and cultures.

The world we live in today produces more bullets a year than the books it prints. As long as nuclear deterrence is used as a way to curb war, human beings will not enjoy a culture of peace. Today's expanding nuclear arsenals are a direct threat to peace. How far humankind is from realizing the aspiration set out in UNESCO's Constitution:

"[S]ince wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Cuba notes with concern that the deep rift that divides human society into rich and poor and the growing disparity between the developed and the developing world pose a serious threat to prosperity, peace, security and global stability. We are convinced that, in order to preserve and promote peace, the policies of States should be directed towards the elimination

of the threat of war, particularly nuclear war, a commitment to the peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for and the promotion of the right to development. There can be no peace without full respect for the sovereignty of States; there can be no peace without respect for the self-determination of peoples and the territorial integrity of States. The use of unilateral coercive measures as a foreign policy tool must cease.

It is necessary to put an end to violence, to respect life and to promote dialogue and cooperation. It is necessary to emphasize education and transmitting values of peace. Promoting and establishing a culture of peace require condemning all terrorist acts, means and practices, including State terrorism, and taking concrete action to combat this scourge.

Putting an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba is an action for peace. This Assembly has signalled that through an annual resolution adopted by an overwhelming majority for 28 years. There can be no true culture of peace when the United States Government launches a new campaign of slander and discredit against Cuba as part of its increasingly hostile policy towards our country. That campaign is driven by the political failure of trying to make Cubans surrender by tightening the economic blockade and measures to deny us fuel, against the backdrop of the demonstrated ability of our people to resist. We condemn the actions of the United States Embassy in Cuba, from which mercenaries receive their instructions and funding to incite violence, disrupt the public order and defy law enforcement.

The new forms of aggression against Cuba will fail, just as the blockade policy has failed over the past 60 years. We Cubans reaffirm our commitment to peace and the promotion of a culture of peace. We reaffirm the full force and effect of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. We maintain that peace is a necessary precondition for the promotion and protection of all human rights for all persons.

**Mr. Al Assiri (Saudi Arabia)** (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting on a very important subject. I would also like to thank

the delegation of Bangladesh for introducing draft resolution A/74/L.23. I will try to be brief.

Agenda item 15, entitled, "Culture of peace", is a broad and comprehensive concept enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. The Organization works to maintain international peace and security and prevent any form of disruption to international relations among States. Over the past two decades, it has become clear that there has been broader support and participation within the United Nations system with regard to the consolidation of peace and peacebuilding through dialogue among cultures and religions.

The General Assembly's designation of 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace catalysed the international consensus on the promotion of a set of values, positions, traditions, behaviours and ways of life, based on mutual respect, the condemnation of violence and the promotion of human rights. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the link between peace and development has become the common denominator.

Our work today, however, which is characterized by diversity and multilateralism, has become more complicated owing to the bad and harmful use of various social media platforms, known as the new media, which will surely lead to further spread of such diseases as hatred, violence and xenophobia and to eventually slipping into the abhorrent terrorism that has hindered development and made providing education in some parts of the world almost impossible. Terrorism has disrupted efforts to achieve peace, by inciting hatred, violence and the failure to acknowledge the other. Of course, the opposite effect is achieved when social media is used in a proper and positive manner.

In order to establish a world of peace today, it is now incumbent on the international community to adopt comprehensively integrated policies and operationalize preventive mechanisms, as well as promote coexistence and dialogue with others. Those values should be passed down to future generations through education, and they should be highlighted by all forms of mass media. Efforts should be made to enhance mutual understanding and ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, as such efforts will have a significant impact on conflict resolution and prevention from the very beginning. Such efforts will also promote comprehensive economic growth and help

maintain development gains and contribute to moving forward with the implementation of its plans.

The participation of women and young people in stepping up international efforts to achieve the desired goals, as well as initiatives to achieve and consolidate international peace, is very important in today's society. They must be included in identifying challenges and solutions related to young peacebuilders and be invited to participate in conferences and forums on peacemaking and peacebuilding. Their voices should be heard, and their recommendations should be listened to and translated into concrete actions.

My country has made major strides in building and sustaining peace, as well as resolving international conflicts through peaceful means, while also preventing them to the extent possible, avoiding their exacerbation and mitigating their impacts. The actions taken by my country are based on its deep understanding and application of the principles enshrined in the Charter and those of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, as well as on the belief of our wise leadership over the ages in the principle of maintaining international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia feels that it has an important role to play in the world, both at the regional and international levels, as well as with regard to its unique standing in exercising the custodianship conferred upon it over the two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also aware of its economic importance as one of the top oil-producing countries and one of the first countries to adopt policies aimed at safeguarding the stability of oil markets and the uninterrupted supply of oil to global markets.

Saudi Arabia established the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. Those present at the Centre's opening in Vienna, on 26 November 2012, included representatives of various religions and cultures. The Centre represents a historic move towards responsible and constructive humanitarian dialogue, based on highlighting the shared values of the followers of religions at the core of divine messages and human cultures. It is hoped that the Centre will be a beacon for enlightened dialogue on issues of interest to every community.

In many cases, a lack of understanding has led to grinding wars, bloody conflicts and heinous crimes,

in addition to extremism, waves of violence and terrorism. The Centre aims to enhance the role of the family in society, prevent its disintegration and renew commitment to moral values and principles. We are all aware of the state of our world as a result of the spread of injustice, corruption, the rise of social, health and environmental ills, economic crises, xenophobia, human trafficking and an unprecedented level of criminality. The spread of those phenomena was what compelled the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to establish the International Centre. We hope that it will contribute to closing the wide gaps among components of the human community and achieve the humanitarian and noble goals that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is always endeavouring to achieve everywhere.

**Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace held on 13 September we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the implementation and the follow-up of which we are assuring through draft resolution A/74/L.23, which Ecuador has the honour to co-sponsor once again. At the Forum, I focused on the culture of peace as the only sustainable pathway for States to take, while referring to universal disarmament and my country's rejection of all forms of military occupation and aggression.

I recall today the proclamation in the UNESCO Constitution that, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. What better tribute can we pay to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations than to achieve a more peaceful world? The coming year will be crucial not only because of the historical commemorations to be held, but because it will serve as an opportunity for us to modernize and improve the peacebuilding architecture at the United Nations, and therefore around the world.

The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will also take place next year. In addition, a significant majority of States will be signing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which will serve as a catalyst for its universalization. Latin America and the Caribbean, a peaceful and nuclear-weapon-free zone, will also likely be further strengthened by becoming a nuclear-test-free zone. In 2020 we will also begin the countdown to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

How can we consolidate peace in the world if we do not achieve development and, at the same time, how can we achieve development without a culture of peace?

If anything has changed since the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, 20 years ago, it is information and communications technology. That is why I was honoured, in September during the informal interactive dialogue at the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, to chair a discussion on digital media as a new weapon of our modern times. We were all in agreement about the need to take stock of our efforts in order to build greater tolerance and foster respect among and within our countries. In the end, we concluded that digital media could indeed be used as a weapon, but that it could also be a great tool for promoting the culture of peace and non-violence. It is up to us to address the existing challenges, stop the spread of hate speech and take advantage of new technologies. That is why I highlight in particular paragraph 19 of the draft resolution to be adopted in the General Assembly this morning, which refers to strategies in the sphere of information and communications technology for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The more digital media that is used to spread hate speech, the more we need to use digital media to counteract it. We must overcome corrosive rhetoric and build more inclusive communities.

The concept of the culture of peace is embedded in the Constitution of Ecuador. However, in the face of extreme violence and organized crime, that is not enough. If we are to achieve peace, we must not only renew and revitalize our commitments to doing so every day, but also mobilize the efforts of our peoples to consolidate and defend it. In the beginning of October, we saw acts of extreme violence committed in Ecuador, and I swiftly condemned those acts before the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in open debates of the Security Council (see S/PV.8668) and in the General Assembly. But as of tomorrow, two months will have passed since the violence peaked and, in that regard, I would like to share with the Assembly some of the critical details about that period that have compelled us to place a sharper focus on promoting the culture of peace.

The main roads for accessing the Andean region were closed, with major urban centres soon running short of food and medicine and becoming unable to move by land. Ecuador had to transport provisions by air to its

largely populated cities, while drinking water supplies were cut off in several locations. Violent extremism seeks to try to isolate and terrorize the population. The military base at La Balbina was attacked. A great deal of coordination and tactical preparation went into those acts of extreme violence. The perpetrators employed urban guerrilla techniques, using homemade shields and weapons that they had produced in serial quantities. Many of the criminals wore gas masks and protective helmets. They coordinated their occupation of strategic sites and transit transport hubs in the capital. They spread messages calling for widespread rebellion, undermining peace and seeking to destabilize the Government.

On 15 October the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) condemned the destructive acts that were perpetrated, mobilized support to the Ecuadorian Government from the Latin America and Caribbean region and recognized the efforts to restore social peace. It also urged the Government and the people of Ecuador to continue to firmly defend the democratic order, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which constitute the best guarantees for peace and social progress in a free society. We cannot fight hatred with more hatred; rather, we must do so through institutions and by perpetually promoting a culture of peace. Ecuador has made it clear, both here at the United Nations and at the OAS, that in the face of violent extremism, the Ecuadorian security forces did not fire any lethal weapons.

Returning to the topic of information technologies, that violent period also saw the spread of false information, which exacerbated the violence and caused irreparable damage. Member States had an opportunity last week to reflect on how we should move forward in strengthening online democracy and the responsible use of cyberspace and information. Each and every one of us is responsible for ensuring that. As a country of peace, Ecuador recognizes and promotes the rights to development and to peace as human rights, which mutually reinforce one another. For Ecuador, today marks 60 days since dialogue triumphed over violence and institutions and peace triumphed over hatred.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our commitment to deepening efforts to establish a global culture of peace. To that end, we have sponsored the three draft resolutions submitted today to the General Assembly for consideration (A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25) and will support their implementation.

**Mr. Kadiri (Morocco)** (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled “Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/74/476), in which he emphasizes the prevention of violent extremism as well as the use of mediation and dialogue as important ways to contribute to peace. I would like to take this opportunity to pay heartfelt tribute to the Secretary-General for the selflessness and dedication he has shown at the helm of our Organization in his efforts to achieve peace.

The culture of peace is the very *raison d'être* of our Organization, as it embodies the three pillars that guide the work of the United Nations, namely, development, peace and security and human rights. As a conscientious, responsible and active actor within the community of nations, the Kingdom of Morocco remains convinced that strengthening multilateralism and taking coherent and collective action in our Organization in favour of dialogue, pluralism and mutual respect are essential to meeting the many challenges currently facing our world, especially the rise of ideological conflicts, intolerance, nationalist sentiments, violence and extremism.

As an intersectional hub where different cultures and civilizations interact with one another, the Kingdom of Morocco is proud of its ancestral tradition of promoting intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue. Respect for cultural and religious diversity is an integral part of daily life and is embedded in the collective consciousness of Moroccan society. The mosques, synagogues and churches in the various cities of the Kingdom of Morocco have always respectfully coexisted. At the national, regional and international levels, the Kingdom of Morocco, under the guidance of His Majesty King Mohammed VI — may God assist Him — is working tirelessly to strengthen the values of peace, harmony, mutual understanding and respect for cultural and religious diversity. In that regard, I would like to emphasize that, at the invitation of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Commander of the Believers, His Holiness Pope Francis visited Morocco on 30 and 31 March. That historic papal visit, which was the second after that of Pope John Paul II in 1985, served as strong and clear testament to Morocco's leading role in promoting dialogue, understanding and cooperation among different religions and cultures.

Education is a bulwark and a fundamental means to combat the scourge of discrimination based on hate and

extremism. That is why education is of fundamental importance to Morocco. To that end, the Moroccan education system instils in children, from a very young age, the virtues of respect, openness, diversity and human rights. In that context, textbooks and school curriculums are systematically and periodically reviewed to include the values that promote coexisting in harmony with and in tolerance of others. I would like to take this opportunity to commend UNESCO's efforts towards promoting education and the culture of peace around the world.

Similarly, in order to highlight the just, noble and respectful values of Islam as well as combat all forms of radicalism and extremism, the Kingdom is carrying out various initiatives such as reforming the curriculum on religion, improving religious education and promoting cooperation with brotherly and friendly countries, particularly in Africa. In addition, on the instructions of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Morocco established the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Ulemas and the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Murchidines and Murchidates — for men and women preachers. In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco provides multidimensional training for hundreds of preachers from a large number of African, Arab and European countries.

Furthermore, Morocco is proud and honoured to have been behind and to have greatly contributed to the adoption and implementation of plans of action, documents and resolutions constituting the cornerstone of United Nations efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of peace and fighting all forms of discrimination and exclusion. In that regard, I want to highlight the following.

First, the Kingdom of Morocco attaches great importance to the fight against all forms of discrimination, hatred and rejection of others, including Islamophobia, antisemitism and Christianophobia. Thus, Morocco co-organized, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, international meetings that resulted in the adoption of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

Secondly, Morocco has engaged positively in the formulation and implementation of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement

to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, launched by the Secretary-General in July 2017.

Thirdly, my country contributed to the establishment and implementation of the plans of action on safeguarding religious sites and on hate speech, formulated under the leadership of Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, respectively. I take this opportunity to re-express to Mr. Moratinos and Mr. Dieng Morocco's warm congratulations for their tireless efforts and concrete achievements in the implementation of their crucial mandates for the United Nations and to assure them of my country's full support.

Fourthly, in 2016 Morocco hosted an international conference, in which hundreds of religious, political and civil society leaders from 120 countries took part and which resulted in the adoption of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities, which constitutes a reference in this domain.

Fifthly, Morocco instigated the adoption by consensus by the Assembly on 25 July of resolution 73/328, which my country introduced, entitled "Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech". The resolution was sponsored by 90 Member States, and we thank all Member States for supporting it.

The Kingdom of Morocco warmly welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs. As a founding member of the Alliance, Morocco works to promote understanding and cultural and religious enrichment and spares no effort to promote a dialogue of peace allowing genuine synergies to blossom within the international community. The Kingdom of Morocco is aware of the fundamental role of the Alliance of Civilizations in that context and is therefore delighted and honoured to host the Alliance's ninth global forum in 2020. My country is all the more honoured because it will be the first time that the forum is held in Africa.

**Ms. Quiel Murcia** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Two decades after the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999, this occasion is certainly a cause to rejoice but

even more so a time to reassess the path we have set ourselves to achieve a more peaceful, sustainable, fair and inclusive world.

Panama welcomes the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's reports "A world against violence and violent extremism" (A/74/195) and "Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace" (A/74/476), which emphasize the value of multilateral cooperation to the international community's efforts in effectively addressing the related problems of polarization, intolerance, violent extremism and terrorism. As a principle of our foreign policy, Panama favours dialogue and consensus-building, as well as cooperation, mediation and multilateralism as tools to promote peace and understanding.

Panama welcomes the Secretary-General's appeal regarding the need to take advantage of the creativity and energy of young people in meeting those challenges. With that vision, my country is committed to global efforts to combat radicalization, especially given the threat it poses to children and young people in particular. To that end, we firmly believe in education as the main tool for the prevention and public awareness-raising of intolerant behaviour and the use and reach of hate speech and extremism.

As a country with a large young population, we are committed to investing in the social development of our young people as a priority so that they may fully develop their abilities. Entering the academic and/or working world equipped with critical thinking limits the manipulative impact of xenophobic, extremist and violent currents facing our young people today. We also recognize the crucial role of sport in building peaceful societies, and are therefore grateful for the leadership of Bangladesh in promoting draft resolution A/74/L.24, proclaiming World Chess Day.

This year has been marked by a series of events connected to violent extremism and extreme nationalism, highlighting the need to overcome the obstacles we face in order to prevent young people from being exposed to information that fosters false ideologies and violent behaviour, which have no place in an increasingly plural and diverse world. As a multi-ethnic and pluricultural country that firmly believes in respect for human rights, diversity and the coexistence of religious beliefs, we welcome the United Nations efforts to promote interreligious dialogue

as one of the pillars of fostering inclusion, peace, development and, accordingly, the promotion of more tolerant societies.

We also welcome the actions being promoted by the United Nations in favour of open and fluid communication with major technology and social network companies with a view to finding ways to reduce hate speech and extremist content on the Internet. We recognize that violence today is perpetrated not only with weapons but also virtually and has an alarming reach into vulnerable sectors of society, without discriminating between developed and developing countries. My country therefore supports the broad dissemination of the strategy of the Department of Global Communications and of the work carried out by agencies such as UNESCO and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre on campaigns aimed at promoting peace and combating xenophobia, hatred, disinformation and stigmatization.

In Panama's view, social investment prevents conflict and promotes peace. As a country that has been demilitarized since 1990, we have focused the investment of resources on sectors that provide greater opportunities for the promotion of economic and social growth, thereby contributing in a comprehensive manner to regional and global peace.

I conclude by pointing out that, by co-sponsoring the three draft resolutions before us today, I reiterate my country's firm commitment to global actions designed to effectively implement the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. We recognize that peace is the foundation of development and that quality education for our children and adolescents will drive the elimination of extreme terrorism during this decade of action, which will require concerted efforts combining national actions and a multilateral system determined to achieve concrete results and to ensure that violence is not normalized, much less institutionalized.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): At the outset, my delegation would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the agenda item "Culture of peace" (A/74/476). The report was requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/129, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, sponsored by the Philippines and Pakistan. This year's draft resolution (A/74/L.25) emphasizes that the virtues of peace, harmony, cooperation and

brotherhood are the common denominators of all faiths, cultures and civilizations. We remain committed to the promotion of a culture of peace nationally as well as globally.

Pakistan is a pluralistic, multicultural and multi-ethnic society. Our founding father declared that the religion, caste or creed of a citizen has nothing to do with the business of the State. A prime example of Pakistan's policy is the initiative taken by Prime Minister Imran Khan to open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor between India and Pakistan. This has enabled the Sikh community from India and across the world to visit one of its holiest sites without any visa requirements.

Unfortunately, we seem to be trapped in the echo chambers of hate speech, supremacist ideologies, neofascist beliefs, bigotry, intolerance and xenophobia. Antisemitism has resurfaced. Even more pervasive is the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

After 9/11, the war on terror turned virtually into a war on Islam. The pernicious equation of Islam with terrorism has justified discrimination against Muslim individuals, communities and entire nations. It has justified a series of foreign invasions in the Muslim world. It has also justified the denial of justice and self-determination to the Palestinian and Kashmiri peoples.

Today Islamophobia has assumed a deadly dimension in India. The mothership of the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a fascist organization created almost 100 years ago. Its founder, Gowalkar, endorsed Hitler's aim of "purifying" the Aryan race by eliminating the Jews. He advocated a similar cleansing of Muslims and other minorities from India's Aryan Hindu population. RSS gangs of violent thugs organize and behave like Hitler's Brownshirts. It was an RSS member who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi. In 1992, an RSS-led mob destroyed the historic Babri mosque in Ayodhya. Only last month, the Indian Supreme Court handed over the mosque site to those very people who had destroyed it to build a Hindu temple.

Also in 1992, thousands of Muslims were killed in Mumbai, then known as Bombay, by Hindu extremist mobs. There is considerable evidence that in 2002, Mr. Modi, a lifelong member of the RSS, as Chief Minister of Gujarat, orchestrated the massacre of 2,000 Muslim men, women and children. The chilling slogan

heard at the RSS rallies is "The only place for a Muslim is the graveyard or Pakistan".

The BJP-RSS is already implementing its plan for ethnic cleansing across several parts of India. In Assam, 2 million Muslims and Christians have been arbitrarily stripped of their Indian nationality. Thousands are being held in concentration camps. This new nationality registration is to be applied across India. Only yesterday, the Indian Parliament passed a patently anti-Muslim law called the Citizenship Amendment Bill, which envisions granting citizenship to all in India except the Muslims.

Muslims are being indiscriminately killed across India, with complete impunity, by Hindu cow vigilantes and extremists. Indian journalists, the electronic and print media, and even opposition politicians have been intimidated and coerced into either silence or, even worse, collaboration.

The BJP-RSS has now decided to impose what they themselves call a "final solution" for Jammu and Kashmir, unashamed of their choice of this ominous phrase. After abolishing the legislative structures in occupied Kashmir and imposing direct rule from New Delhi, the BJP-RSS Government on 5 August changed two articles in the Indian Constitution to eliminate Jammu and Kashmir's special and autonomous status, divided the State into two territories and removed the prohibition on outside settlers, with the aim of transforming it from a Muslim-majority State into a Hindu-majority territory. Under the relevant provisions of the pertinent Security Council resolutions, these measures are null and void.

Anticipating a popular Kashmiri revolt, India added 180,000 troops to the already 700,000 stationed in occupied Kashmir before 5 August. A round-the-clock curfew and a complete communications blackout was imposed. Thousands of Kashmiri political leaders and activists, including two former Chief Ministers, were arrested.

After 130 days, Kashmir remains in lockdown. Since 5 August, according to India's own data, an additional 4,000 political leaders, professionals and activists have been arrested. Many have been transported to jails all over India. According to reports trickling out of occupied Kashmir, 20,000 men and boys have been captured and transported to prisons in various parts of India. Thousands of abducted young boys have been subjected to torture and other inhuman

and degrading treatment. Often the screams of tortured boys are broadcast over loudspeakers as an instrument of intimidation. Peaceful demonstrations have been brutally quelled with pellet guns, killing and maiming scores of Kashmiris.

We fear that Indian repression will intensify further. The Kashmiris will inevitably express their rage and rejection. The Indian forces will without doubt respond with characteristic brutality. With good reason, Genocide Watch, a civil-society organization, has warned of the danger of a genocide in occupied Kashmir.

India's actions are propelling South Asia towards a catastrophe. To divert attention from its repression, India could launch another false-flag operation to justify further aggression against Pakistan. The Indian Army Chief has repeatedly threatened war. He has spoken of the feasibility of fighting "a limited war" under the nuclear overhang. On 16 August, the Indian Defence Minister held out a thinly disguised nuclear threat against Pakistan. India has issued new maps that show both Indian-occupied and Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir as part of India. India's ceasefire violations have also intensified. We have observed threatening Indian army movements along the Line of Control in Kashmir in recent days. Pakistan does not want war with India, but, if India mounts another attack against Pakistan, we will respond vigorously and effectively.

It is high time for the international community to wake up to the clear and present danger and intervene to defuse this India-instigated crisis. The United Nations is a party to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. It has an obligation to secure the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council on Jammu and Kashmir. It has a responsibility to protect the fundamental human rights of the Kashmiri people, including their right to self-determination. We hope that the world will act before it is too late for peace and the thousands — and perhaps millions — of Kashmiris, Pakistanis and Indians who may perish in the conflict.

**Ms. Annuar** (Brunei Darussalam): Brunei Darussalam aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Brunei Darussalam is pleased to once again co-sponsor the traditional draft resolutions (A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25) under this agenda item. We thank the delegations of Bangladesh, Pakistan

and the Philippines for their excellent work, and we congratulate Armenia on its initiative. We would also like to express our appreciation for the invaluable insight and recommendations that are included in the Secretary-General's reports (A/74/195 and A/74/476) on this agenda item.

It has been 20 years since we adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Against the backdrop of the rapidly evolving nature and growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the alarming increase in hate speech, Brunei Darussalam believes that our shared objective of fostering a culture of peace and non-violence and fighting intolerance remain as important as ever. Allow me to share briefly how we are advancing national efforts, as well as cooperation at the regional and international levels.

Brunei Darussalam has been immensely blessed as a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous State. Instilling a culture of peace and understanding is vital to our rich history and traditions and flows from our strong community values, with an emphasis on the centrality of the family institution. Bearing in mind the importance of investing in youth as active agents in building a peaceful world, Bruneians are taught, from the earliest stages of life, the values of respect and to always respect their elders, family, neighbours and people from all walks of life, regardless of race, gender, religion or culture. Providing high-quality education and skills development to our youth is a top priority on the national agenda, particularly in realizing our 2035 national vision. In addition, mandatory civic education is taught in schools to guide students on how to treat one another with compassion and understanding and contribute positively to a diverse, respectful and law-abiding society.

Cultivating interreligious and intercultural dialogue and understanding is also a key component of our multi-faith and diverse community. Moreover, we encourage inclusiveness in our everyday community engagement, such as celebrating holidays together, which helps to forge enduring bonds of family and friendship, thereby ensuring interfaith harmony and social cohesion across the country.

As a small State, Brunei Darussalam is cognizant of the need to be vigilant in the face of potential risks to our peace, stability and cohesiveness. We therefore undertake a whole-of-society approach in preventing and countering the threat of radicalization and violent

extremism. That includes the responsible dissemination of information through the use of media, the Internet and Friday sermons. Faith leaders, teachers and village heads play a prominent role in providing a positive influence, particularly in countering negative teachings and ideologies that could disrupt the peace of the family institution, the society and the State.

Brunei Darussalam is a proud member of ASEAN — a diverse grouping of 10 nations that is home to over 600 million people, with a multitude of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures. Unity in diversity is the very essence of ASEAN, as we aspire to create an inclusive, resilient, rules-based, people-centred and people-oriented community. Our shared commitments are enshrined in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and 2017 ASEAN Declaration on a Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society. Brunei Darussalam remains committed to supporting efforts at the international level in promoting tolerance and understanding among different faiths and civilizations.

Brunei Darussalam actively participates in global interfaith dialogues and conferences, notably at the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of the Alliance of Civilizations, including the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, in guaranteeing safety to worship in peace and that the values of compassion and tolerance are fostered globally. I would be remiss not to mention and express our appreciation for the valuable contributions of UNESCO as the lead agency for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

In conclusion, in the light of the upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and amid the troubling threats to multilateralism, it is now more important than ever that we renew our collective efforts to foster a culture of peace and tolerance, continuously seek to understand one another and appreciate the richness in our diversity. In that undertaking, we must also remain committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples and strengthen universal peace.

**Mr. Aliyev** (Republic of Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of Bangladesh

and the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines, respectively, for their skilful efforts, dedication and leadership in facilitating the negotiations on the relevant draft resolutions (A/74/L.23 and A/74/L.25) and for their strong commitment to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The very fact that the General Assembly has adopted a growing number of resolutions under the agenda item “Culture of peace” with the overwhelming support of Member States attests to the primacy and urgency given by the international community to the topic. At the same time, the annual draft resolutions entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” and “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” continue to serve as universal standard-setting and guidance in this area of activities and cooperation. The culture of peace is interlinked with the objectives of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are critical enablers of, sustainable development.

The promotion of a culture of peace is equally important in the context of addressing conflicts, especially those aggravated by policies aimed at sowing dissension and inculcating enmity and hatred on religious and ethnic grounds. Intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the national and international levels has therefore been, and must remain, one of the important avenues within the broader objectives of peacebuilding, sustaining peace and reconciliation.

Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the leading role of UNESCO and the critically important work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in advancing the cause of a culture of peace. Azerbaijan welcomes the launching by the Secretary-General, earlier this year, of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, prepared by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, which provides an action-oriented framework with recommendations to support relevant stakeholders in preventing attacks against places of worship.

Among the initiatives put forward and successfully implemented by Azerbaijan, the Baku process has proved itself to be one of the leading international platforms for fostering dialogue and cultural diversity. The Secretary-General emphasized the important role of the Baku process in advocating for dialogue among

cultures in his report on the current agenda item to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (A/72/488). That role was also emphasized most recently in the outcome documents of the eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held on 25 and 26 October in Baku. An integral part of the Baku process is the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, which, since 2011 has been organized biennially by Azerbaijan, in partnership with UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

We welcome the growing international recognition of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, which, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General I mentioned, has established itself as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue. That high assessment of the role of the World Forum was further promulgated by the General Assembly in resolutions 72/136 and 73/129. It is also emphasized in the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. The fifth World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, which took place in Baku in May, focused on dialogue as an instrument for action against discrimination, inequality and violent conflict. The current report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace states that the fifth World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue

“centred around three core themes: the management of diversity; youth and intercultural leadership; and displacement and human security. In particular, the Forum sought to hone its impact as a platform for catalysing concrete action, using innovative formats and devising ambitious outcomes to be achieved through new strategic collaborations.” (A/74/476, para. 9)

There is also information about the fifth World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in the report of the Secretary-General on human rights and cultural diversity (A/74/212), submitted to the General Assembly at its current session pursuant to resolution 72/170. Among the various events that took place at this year’s Forum was the high-level panel of heads of international organizations, during which participants exchanged views on building synergies and partnerships among relevant stakeholders, including those active in the political, economic, financial, humanitarian and

social spheres. Furthermore, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism organized a special event on the margins of the Forum to showcase good practices for engaging and partnering with youth to build resilience in the face of violent extremism, specifically by addressing discrimination and inequalities through innovative approaches.

In November, Azerbaijan hosted the second Baku Summit of World Religious Leaders, which was attended by participants representing 70 countries. The Summit adopted the Baku declaration as its outcome, which emphasized the role of religious leaders in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The United Nations continued support for successful initiatives on the culture of peace and multiculturalism is essential in the context of building relationships, overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions, and implementing development frameworks and policies. My country looks forward to enhanced cooperation with all stakeholders in achieving those noble goals.

**Mrs. Tripathi (India):** Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. Those words were enshrined into the Constitution of UNESCO more than seven decades ago, at a time the world was emerging from the gloomy shadows of the two world wars. Since then, under the auspices of the United Nations, the promotion of a culture of peace has grown into a global discourse. Within that framework, peace encompasses far more than an absence of conflict. The promotion of tolerance, disarmament, sustainable economic and social development, a democratic ethos, gender equality and respect for human rights and dignity also play key roles.

It has been recognized that, in order to transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, it is necessary to transform individual behaviour and institutional practices. What begins with the development of inner peace and scientific temper permeates into the collective conscience and becomes enshrined in institutions. Education and raising awareness play key roles in that process. That is particularly relevant in the context of children’s and young people’s development. A large segment of that group suffers from poverty and inequality and is vulnerable to radicalization and violent mobilizations. We need to galvanize efforts to use quality education and sustainable development as tools for addressing those vulnerabilities. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development is pivotal in that regard. We welcome the successful holding of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace on 13 September to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. It gave us an opportunity to reaffirm our collective resolve to forge wide-ranging partnerships to promote the culture of peace.

We appreciate the efforts taken by Bangladesh to submit the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/74/L.23), which India has co-sponsored. Realizing interreligious and intercultural dialogue by engaging faith leaders, civil society and academia is important for building intellectual and moral solidarity. We welcome the various efforts of the United Nations and its States Members towards achieving that end.

The spirit of cooperation is the crux of the culture of peace, an agenda that should not be misused or trivialized for the purposes of political propaganda. We need to be particularly cautious in situations where we know that the fox is guarding the henhouse. The attempts by one delegation today to misuse this agenda should hardly come as a surprise to those who have witnessed its many attempts to masquerade as a champion of the culture of peace while besmirching the spirit of cooperation by spinning false narratives for political gains. In reality, the footprint of every major act of international terrorism passes through that country. Terrorists are trained in their safe havens to take innocent lives. Children and youth are given guns instead of books. Women are oppressed. Minorities are persecuted. The virulent terror that emanates from that territory threatens to destabilize global peace. Yet that delegation makes baseless allegations, with a pathological obsession, about the internal matters of others. Our position on such issues are well-known. We firmly reject all those allegations. The international community has not paid any attention to such deceitful propaganda, which is motivated by aims to covet territory. We are confident that the international community will maintain its stance in that regard.

Today we have come to recognize that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men. The full and equal participation of women at all levels of decision-making is indispensable in the quest for peace. We need to enhance the meaningful participation of women peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Their experiences and priorities must contribute to long-term

stability. We need to convert our aspirations into actions in a synergistic manner. The commemorations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the fortieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women provide opportunities to reaffirm our resolve towards collective action.

India, the largest democracy in the world, is also the second-most populous nation in the world. Our civilizational legacy treats nature as a source of nurture, and there is high value placed on living in harmony with nature. The Vedas are a repository of the holistic development of human beings in harmony with their surroundings. The practice of yoga helps in achieving inner peace.

India is home to a very significant number of practitioners of practically every major religion of the world. They include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and the Bahai faith. Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath in India. His message of peace continues to inspire the thought and action of millions across the globe. This year we celebrate 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. His teachings continue to appeal to devotees of different faiths.

The history of India, in essence, is a narrative of conversations between different civilizations. The enduring principle of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* — meaning, “the entire world is one family” — has guided our interactions and exchanges of thought with the world. We in India understand the importance of building alliances among religions, cultures and ethnic groups. We have always supported all efforts to build bridges of understanding among nations, peoples, religions and cultures across the world. As the culture of peace agenda gains salience in a world riven by inequality, violence and mistrust, we remain deeply committed to its full implementation.

**Ms. Janson** (Canada): Canada is pleased to support the United Nations and Member States in their efforts to advance the culture of peace. The actualization of a global culture of peace demands nations that strive to promote dialogue while also working to protect and preserve the culture of all their citizens. Inclusive societies require respect for cultural diversity and for diversity of religion and belief. Canada supports the promotion of cultural pluralism and the recognition of

cultural diversity as a source of mutual enrichment. Meaningful dialogue across cultural and religious identities is not an abstract idea for Canadians; it is a practical, lived reality that takes place at the grassroots level, among neighbours, families, students and colleagues.

The draft resolutions we are considering today highlight different facets of the culture of peace agenda. We would like to thank Bangladesh, the Philippines, Pakistan and Armenia for their leadership in bringing forward the respective draft resolutions.

In draft resolution A/74/L.24, on “World Chess Day”, Canada supported Armenia’s inclusion of language recognizing the importance of equal opportunities for women and girls in sport and recreational activities. Ensuring women’s access helps support women’s full and equitable participation in societies.

Canada also thanks our colleagues from Bangladesh for their efforts on draft resolution A/74/L.23, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”, and for their long-standing commitment to advancing a culture of peace. This past September, Canada’s Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, Jacqueline O’Neill, joined the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, on the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action, where she highlighted the urgent need for more women to participate and be engaged in conversations about peace and security. We are pleased that this draft resolution, like its forerunners, recognizes the role of women and youth in building a culture of peace, as well as in preventing and solving conflicts and post-conflict situations.

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Pakistan and the Philippines for their leadership on draft resolution A/74/L.25, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”. That draft resolution affirms that respectful dialogue builds understanding, fosters inclusion and lays the foundation for a culture of peace.

In particular, we would like to emphasize the importance of the draft resolution’s call for reconciliation as key to a culture of peace. Canada’s ongoing national reconciliation process aims to renew Canada’s relationship with indigenous peoples, and is inspired by historic treaties of friendship and peace. Canada’s past is not free from conflict, and Canada

cannot move forward if indigenous peoples continue to be held back. We believe strongly that indigenous peoples have the right to participate and be heard in decisions that affect them at the global, regional and local levels. A more peaceful and prosperous world cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples.

Building a culture of peace based on inclusion and respect for diversity is a whole-of-society project. To that end, we applaud the draft resolution for recognizing the important role of civil society and initiatives that strengthen people-to-people bonds at all levels and in all sectors of society.

Today we are increasingly hearing voices of hate and exclusion that are actively undermining a culture of peace and exacerbating divisions in society. Our debate today is an important reminder that we must redouble our efforts in the face of racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and all other types of cultural and religious prejudice. We must work together in dialogue and action with all members of our society and our richly diverse global community.

**Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua is a faithful supporter of a global culture of peace, harmony and love among nations, where a multilateralism of international rules prevails, through international and regional organizations, over and above the greed and avarice of the most powerful, thereby promoting solidarity, cooperation and equitable relations for the sustainable development of all our peoples. While we have the United Nations, its Charter and international law to achieve peace, we continue to bear witness to repeated violations of international law through military aggression, usurpation and coups d’état against legitimate, democratically elected Governments, as well as economic warfare, including so-called sanctions, embargoes and economic and financial boycotts — all of this imposed by the hegemony of the imperial Power and the law of the strongest.

This international order must change. It must be replaced by one that upholds respect for the norms of human coexistence and the culture of peace. We must hold steadfast to the peaceful resolution of disputes that may arise between and within States and nations. In this Organization we must fight for the peace and dignity of all our peoples. Nicaragua will continue to act as a stalwart defender of peace and security in the world.

We are pleased to share with the General Assembly that Nicaragua is living in peace and security. We are currently implementing our national plan entitled Strategy for a Culture of Dignity, Respect, Nonviolence, Reconciliation and Peace, for the Nicaraguan people. As our Vice-President Rosario Murillo has said, "Peace is a treasure we must cherish and guard". This inclusive Strategy incorporates, as a fundamental component, the role of women and young people, having been developed through years of implementation of law, policy and development programmes and projects in the country. It even includes an early-warning system, allowing us to detect signs of violence and risk to life in all its forms.

We thank the delegations of Armenia, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Pakistan for having presented the respective draft resolutions. We are pleased to have co-sponsored draft resolution A/74/L.23, entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace".

We reiterate that the United Nations must fulfil its historic role of fostering respect, understanding, sovereign security, a future of peace, peaceful solutions free from interference or coercion, working always on equal terms, privileging multilateralism and the self-determination of all women and men.

Promoting a culture of peace means reaffirming the validity of the upholding sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and the right to self-determination of our peoples, and, above all, our right and our duty to eradicate poverty and forge a better and happier world for our sons and daughters. Boys and girls are born to be happy and to live in peace.

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

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/74/L.23, A/74/L.24 and A/74/L.25.

Before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolutions, one by one, I would like to remind members that they will have an opportunity to explain their vote on any or all of the three draft resolutions either before or after action.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before taking action, I would like to remind speakers that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on the representative of Armenia.

**Mr. Margaryan (Armenia):** I would like to present the position of the delegation of Armenia on draft resolution A/74/L.25, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

Armenia strongly supports interreligious and intercultural dialogue in promoting peace, tolerance and human rights, including through education. Education, in particular human rights education, is key to preventing discrimination and hatred on ethnic, racial or religious grounds. In that regard, we regret that proposals of the delegation of Armenia with regard to prevention through education and culture were not reflected in the draft resolution.

Armenia reiterates its objection to the thirty-first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which refers to an event named the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue. A particular Member State is continuously promoting a policy of organizing various international forums to distract the attention of the international community from the dire human rights situation in the country and to promote its distorted conflict narratives by disseminating hate speech at the State level. It would be erroneous to think that intercultural and interreligious dialogue is possible under conditions of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly and association, and the silencing of dissenting voices.

In that regard, we regret that the event referred to in the draft resolution, which was supposed to promote multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue, is continuously misused by the host country and turned into an instrument of propaganda. We believe that, in organizing international events on multilateralism, intercultural dialogue and the promotion of peace, due regard should also be given to the record of the host country in terms of adherence to its obligations under international human rights law as well as the protection of cultural heritage of historical and religious significance.

Armenia therefore disassociates itself from the thirty-first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, containing reference to the event I mentioned.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position before taking action.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.23, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”. I inform the Assembly that the draft resolution has closed for e-sponsorship.

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 draft resolution A/74/L.23, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belize, Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, the Sudan, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/74/L.23?

*Draft resolution A/74/L.23 was adopted* (resolution 74/21).

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.24, entitled “World Chess Day”.

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 draft resolution A/74/L.24, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Argentina, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, Monaco, Morocco, Nicaragua, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/74/L.24?

*Draft resolution A/74/L.24 was adopted* (resolution 74/22).

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.25, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”.

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 draft resolution A/74/L.25, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Singapore, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/74/L.25?

*Draft resolution A/74/L.25 was adopted (resolution 74/23).*

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to those wishing to speak in explanation of position, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Musayev** (Azerbaijan): I would like to make a statement in explanation of position on resolution 74/23.

As in previous years, the delegation of Azerbaijan actively participated in the negotiation process on the draft resolution. We note with satisfaction that some of our proposals put forward in the course of the informal consultations were accommodated in the text. However, we regret that could not join the sponsors in co-sponsoring the resolution. Our position on the event referred to in the twenty-sixth preambular paragraph was explained in detail in a statement delivered by the delegation of Azerbaijan at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 15 April 2019, the text of which is reproduced in the official records of the meeting (see A/73/PV.75).

At the same time, Azerbaijan supports and shares the main objectives of the resolution and subscribes to its content, purpose and philosophy. We are grateful to the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines for their efforts and impeccable professionalism.

We note that the resolution welcomes the declarations adopted by the Global Forums of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, including the seventh Global Forum, which was held in Baku in April 2016. We also note the invitation to Member States to consider implementing the relevant recommendations addressed to them in the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, prepared by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and launched by the Secretary-General earlier this year.

Furthermore, the resolution just adopted is the third, following resolutions 72/136 and 73/129, to refer to the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held biennially by Azerbaijan in cooperation with UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue. We welcome the growing recognition of the World Forum at the international level. I would like to

thank the United Nations and Member States for their strong support for this important initiative.

Against that backdrop, there is nothing surprising in the inadequate, irrelevant and unethical comments made earlier by the representative of Armenia. We hope that Armenia will learn lessons from the apparent failure of its shameful and deplorable methods of blackmail evidenced during the consultations on the draft resolution. In his attempt to explain its position on the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, the representative of Armenia in fact eloquently confirmed that the words “culture” and “peace” are alien to his country. The representative of Armenia went so far as to lecture others about principles and values that, in reality, his Government has consistently disregarded and opposed. Finally, by obstructing efforts towards the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, challenging various global initiatives and international events only because of their relation to Azerbaijan, Armenia demonstrates that the prospect of it engaging in a constructive search for peace remains elusive.

**Mr. Ho** (United States of America): The United States strongly believes in encouraging a culture of peace through the promotion of justice, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as by rejecting violence and addressing the root causes of conflicts. In joining consensus on resolution 74/21, I would refer the General Assembly to our remarks delivered in the Second Committee on 21 November 2019 on our position with respect to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

In explanation of the United States position with regard to resolution 74/22, entitled “World Chess Day”, let me state that, in joining consensus on the resolution, the United States would refer delegations to our aforementioned 21 November 2019 remarks with respect to our position on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and to prior statements on our position on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

In explanation of our position on resolution 74/23, the United States firmly supports efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation, and we were pleased to join consensus on this resolution. However, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify important points. The United States strongly supports the freedom of expression and religion or belief. We oppose any attempt to unduly

limit the exercise of these fundamental freedoms and therefore disassociate ourselves from paragraph 13 as we had done in 2018 with respect to paragraph 12 of resolution 73/129 (see A/73/PV.51).

We are doing that because the text inaccurately suggests that the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief are at odds with one another. These two freedoms are mutually reinforcing, and both must be respected in order to achieve mutual respect and meaningful interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Rather than seeking restrictions to expression to deal with intolerance, the United States advocates robust protections for free speech as well as the enforcement of appropriate legal regimes that deal with discriminatory acts and hate crimes. We addressed further concerns in our aforementioned general statement delivered on 21 November in the Second Committee.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

**Monsignor Hansen (Holy See):** The Holy See welcomes the adoption of resolution 74/23, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, and thanks the facilitators, Mr. Angelito Nayan of the Philippines and Mr. Muhammad Zulqarnain of Pakistan, for their constructive and professional leadership throughout the negotiations.

The delegation of the Holy See takes this opportunity to reiterate its long-standing commitment to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as important components of the cause of peace. Such dialogue also plays a crucial role in building peaceful, just and inclusive societies, highlighting yet again the major role that religious leaders and faith-based organizations play in the development of each human being and the advancement of the common good. Considering the positive impact of interreligious and intercultural dialogue at the global, regional, national and local levels and its support for peace, stability and mutual respect, the Holy See believes it is important that this agenda item continue to be reviewed annually by the General Assembly.

Among the new elements in this year’s resolution, the Holy See welcomes the inclusion of a reference to the

document “Human fraternity for world peace and living together”, jointly signed by His Holiness Pope Francis and Ahmad al-Tayyib, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, on 4 February 2019, in Abu Dhabi. This document explicitly recognizes the fundamental contribution of fruitful exchange and dialogue to the widespread promotion of a culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and of living together peacefully. In so doing, the “Human fraternity” document represents an important example of interreligious dialogue striving to advance, as the resolution notes, peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect and to create an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding.

The Holy See is also most pleased to see included in the resolution the mention of the initiative to open up the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor in the spirit of interfaith harmony and peaceful neighbourhood and the agreement between the Governments of India and Pakistan to allow visa-free access to pilgrims of all faiths. My delegation commends the delegations of India and Pakistan for their constructive engagement in the efforts to reach consensus on this paragraph.

In conclusion, the Holy See reiterates its firm support for interreligious and intercultural dialogue in the pursuit of peace and human fraternity and assures its commitment to the building of bridges among peoples, nations and faiths.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker for this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

### **Programme of work**

**The Acting President:** Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to make the following announcement concerning the programme of work of the plenary. The consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3, entitled “Report of the Credentials Committee”, and sub-item (b) of agenda item 114, entitled “Election of members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission”, both originally scheduled for Monday, 16 December, has been rescheduled to the afternoon of Wednesday, 18 December, following the consideration of the reports of the Sixth Committee.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*