



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 18 September 2020, 11 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Agenda item 7

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

First report of the General Committee (A/75/250)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the Committee (A/75/250). In that section, the General Committee takes note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled “Organization of the session”, which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, rationalization of work, the closing date of the session, seating arrangements, the schedule of meetings, the general debate and the conduct of meetings, among other things.

Allow me to flag a few points.

In paragraph 3, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the practical arrangements for the conduct of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly will be affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including with regard to whether certain events take place, how they are conducted and the number of attendees. All changes reflect risk assessments and advice provided by the Occupational Safety and

Health Committee of the Crisis Operations Group. The assessments are also based on host city and state guidance, the current phase of the COVID-19 reintegration plan for the United Nations Headquarters complex and an up-to-date understanding of the risks posed by the pandemic to representatives and United Nations personnel.

In paragraph 32, on waiving the requirements of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to encourage delegations to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time in order to promote the punctuality and efficiency up the Assembly’s proceedings.

In paragraph 36, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 73/341, in which the Assembly stressed the need to limit the number of high-level events in the margins of the general debate and underlined the urgent need to preserve the primacy of the general debate.

In paragraph 38, the General Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the general debate will begin on Tuesday, 22 September, and recommends that it continue on Saturday, 26 September.

May I take it that the Assembly takes notes of the information contained in paragraph 38 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 26 September?

It was so decided (decision 75/502).

The President: In paragraph 44, the General Committee brings to the attention of the General

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Assembly information on the conduct of the meetings of the plenary, including on the order and the format of statements.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information provided?

It was so decided.

The President: Also with respect to paragraph 44, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly decide, without setting a precedent, that where physical presence is not practicable, a pre-recorded statement may be submitted by those who are invited to make opening statements at the high-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, pursuant to resolution 73/299, of 14 June 2019.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees with this arrangement?

It was so decided (decision 75/503).

The President: In paragraph 53, the General Committee brings to the attention of the Assembly information on sponsorship of draft resolutions and decisions.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information provided?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 54, the General Committee brings to the attention of the General Assembly information on rights of reply to addresses made by Heads of State.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information provided?

It was so decided.

The President: I should also like to refer to the information contained in paragraph 74 concerning the timely submission of draft proposals for the review of their programme budget implications.

In paragraph 81, the General Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to the views expressed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the use of the phrase “within existing resources” and to the report of the Committee contained in document A/54/7, in which the Committee emphasized the responsibility of the Secretariat to inform the General Assembly thoroughly and accurately

about whether there are enough resources to implement a new activity.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information provided?

It was so decided.

The President: I believe that it will be beneficial to address all the remaining organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all the information and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in section II of the report as a whole?

It was so decided (decision 75/501).

The President: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section III, dealing with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

In section III, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 92 to 94.

In paragraph 95, in connection with sub-item (e) of item 17 of the draft agenda, entitled “Promoting investments for sustainable development”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 96, in connection with item 20 of the draft agenda, entitled “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 97, in connection with item 41 of the draft agenda, entitled “Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, on the understanding that there would be no consideration of this item by the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 98, in connection with item 62 of the draft agenda, entitled “Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India”, the General Committee decided to recommend that consideration of this item be deferred to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 99, in connection with item 66 of the draft agenda, entitled “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B.

I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to reaffirm the position of the Russian Federation vis-à-vis item 66 of the draft agenda, entitled “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine”.

There are no occupied territories in Ukraine. A civil war is under way there; it is an internal armed conflict between those who seized power following the 2014 coup d'état and the population of the eastern areas of Ukraine, which opposed that coup.

The very title of this agenda item grossly distorts reality. Depending on their short-term agenda, the Ukrainian authorities call the operation, aimed at the military repression of the population of the area, an anti-terrorist operation, a hybrid war or even a battle to save Europe. This is the kind of war that has been on going in the minds of Ukrainian politicians for more than six years now. Given this propagandistic narrative, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to launch an honest dialogue with the people of Donetsk and Luhansk, who have refused to support the authorities' discriminatory nationalist policy. The destructive endeavour of the Ukrainian delegation pushing for that agenda item contradicts the only internationally recognized mechanism for resolving the crisis in Ukraine, namely, the set of measures to implement the Minsk agreements

contained in Security Council resolution 2202 (2015). Those documents make no reference to any occupation.

In that connection, I wish to make the following statement. This agenda item, under this title, is not acceptable to us, and we would like to disassociate ourselves from the consensus regarding the decision made to include it in the agenda of the current session. Similar statements by the Russian delegation were made during the meeting of the General Committee.

I wish to thank the 112 delegations of States Members of the United Nations that did not wish to lend their voice to supporting decision 74/581, on this agenda item, during the voting held on 4 September (see A/74/PV.63). The fact that less than half of the membership of the General Assembly voted in favour of this agenda item despite the Assembly's inclination to discuss all kinds of issues speaks volumes.

The President: Before proceeding further, I should like to draw the attention of members to rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

“Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.”

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your responsibilities as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session and to wish you every success in this important post.

I had no intention of making a statement at this meeting, on the understanding that the Assembly, just seven days ago, discussed the matter of the inclusion of the item “The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine” in the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session and made an affirmative decision to include it in the draft agenda despite the fixations and very questionable mathematics of the Russian Federation.

I am satisfied that the small number of States that tried, during the meeting held on 4 September (see A/74/PV.63), to prevent the Assembly from considering one of the most pressing issues of international peace and security today received a firm response from an absolute

majority of Member States. I very much appreciate everyone who supported the decision. Moreover, only two days ago, the General Committee of the current seventy-fifth session, under your wise leadership, Mr. President, already recommended without a vote the inclusion of the item on the agenda. It is now paramount to preserve the integrity of the agenda by retaining the items that have to be considered during the seventy-fifth session, in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly and appropriately recommended by the General Committee.

Having heard yet another statement by the representative of the Russian Federation, it is clear to us that his country continues to live in a bubble of virtual reality. The Russian Federation's state of denial of the obvious is deeply regrettable and does not contribute to the peaceful resolution of this inter-State conflict in the heart of Europe.

The Russian representative today, as he did at the most recent meeting of the General Committee, continued to provide distorted and false information. Yet the facts of the matter are that the Russian Federation, together with Germany father to the Second World War, the diligent successor of the Soviet communist regime that in September 1939 began the occupation of the Baltic States based on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, has been temporarily occupying parts of the territory of Ukraine in Crimea and Donbas since 2014.

The Russian Federation has been recognized as an occupying Power on numerous occasions by the Assembly. It is also worth mentioning that the Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/HRC/44/21, on the "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine", submitted pursuant to resolution 74/168, reminded the Russian Federation of the need to adhere, as an occupying Power, to its obligations under international humanitarian law.

We regret the continuing destructive attempts to deprive Member States of their right to be heard on issues directly related to the authority of the Assembly. We call on Member States to support the retention of the item "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" in the agenda, and we support Member States in defending their rights in the Assembly.

I would like to reiterate my appeal to Member States to counter decisively the destructive attempts to deprive them of this right. The voice of every one of

them is very valuable, and the authority of the General Assembly depends on their vote today, should there be one.

The President: May I take it that the assembly approves the recommendation of the General Committee to include item 66, entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine"?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 100, in connection with item 82 of the draft agenda, entitled "Crimes against humanity", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading F.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 101, in connection with item 93 of the draft agenda, entitled "Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia — residual functions", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading F.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 102, in connection with sub-item (ee) of item 104 of the draft agenda, entitled "Joint courses of action and future-oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading G.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 103, in connection with sub-item (oo) of item 104 of the draft agenda, entitled "Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading G.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 104, in connection with sub-item (aa) of item 131 of the draft agenda,

“Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 105, in connection with item 136 of the draft agenda, “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I.

One representative has asked for the floor. Before proceeding further, I should like to draw the attention of members to rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

“Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.”

Mr. Al Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the inclusion of the item “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, my delegation reiterates its position, as expressed at the sixty-second and sixty-third plenary meetings of the seventy-fourth session, held on 4 September.

My country, the Syrian Arab Republic, continues to believe that this scenario of inclusion, which is being repeated for the third time, lacks transparency. It is based on a manipulation of the rules of procedure and undermines the trust between us and the consensus on the agenda.

Everyone, including the Secretariat, knows that we have been unable to this day to establish clear rules on the responsibility to protect that would prevent the misuse of such a responsibility by some Governments of Member States or its unilateral use without a United Nations mandate. My delegation and a large number of Member States remain unconvinced that the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-fifth session would serve the free, interactive and collective debate on the concept of the responsibility to protect. That is particularly true since informal interactive meetings

were never given a real opportunity to attempt to overcome divergences of opinion on this important and dangerous concept.

We therefore ask anew, in all transparency: What has been the added value of including the responsibility to protect on previous General Assembly agendas? That inclusion has only deepened misunderstandings and undermined trust among us, thereby imposing obstacles to our discussion. Everyone knows that some Governments have exploited the concept of the responsibility to protect before, some are using it today and some will continue to use it in future to justify interference, military intervention and the imposition of unilateral economic sanctions on certain countries under the pretext of human rights and the protection of the peoples of the world.

Do we, as the States Members of the United Nations, have any interest in surmounting the deep disagreements on the concept of the responsibility to protect, particularly the third pillar? Do we have any interest in making the United Nations shoulder the responsibility of providing false cover for military aggression or punishing the peoples of the world economically and militarily through this very dangerous concept, which enjoys no consensus?

We stress the need to continue discussing this issue through informal interactive dialogue. We reject the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly before reaching consensus on the concept, its substance and pillars, as well as guarantees and rules that it will not be misused for political reasons, in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic requests a recorded vote on the inclusion of this dangerous concept, which enjoys no consensus, on the agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. We call on all Member States to vote against its inclusion.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested on the recommendation of the General Committee to include item 136 of the draft agenda, “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, on the agenda of the current session.

I now call on those delegations that wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Ms. Guardia González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation supports the arguments put forward by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and wishes to reiterate its position with regard to the proposal to include the item “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session.

In that connection, international efforts to prevent acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are goals shared by Cuba. Nevertheless, it is well known that States have manipulated the concept of the responsibility to protect, which has had disastrous consequences for countries. This topic was submitted for inclusion only on the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, as its proponents made clear at that time (see A/72/PV.2). However, its inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly has been proposed in subsequent years despite significant and persistent differences of opinion and doubts among Member States in that regard, as evidenced in the debates held on that topic. We remain convinced that including the responsibility to protect as an item on the agenda is premature. It will not enjoy consensus. On the contrary, it will accentuate differences and lead to increased polarization of positions.

My delegation will therefore vote against the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-fifth session.

Mrs. Llano (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We extend the brotherly welcome of the delegation of Nicaragua.

My delegation does not agree to the inclusion of the responsibility to protect as an item on the formal agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. Many countries, particularly developing countries, continue to have serious concerns on this issue. Nicaragua has reiterated on various occasions that this issue does not enjoy consensus with regard to its scope, definition or implications and continues to generate serious doubts arising from its potential political uses and ends.

The responsibility to protect is an interventionist concept that runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Nicaragua therefore rejects

its inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

Mrs. Heusgen (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The General Assembly already voted last Friday for the rollover of agenda item 136, on the responsibility to protect. That decision was confirmed by the General Committee on Wednesday. Questioning a General Assembly decision is not only unprecedented; it is also counterproductive. Diverging views are best addressed through dialogue. Very successful debates over the past three years show that all States Members of the United Nations have a strong interest in further discussing the issue. There is no valid reason for impeding this conversation from continuing.

For the same reasons, we voted in favour of the rollover on Friday, and we will vote again today in favour of including the item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its current session. We call on all Member States to do the same.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the important and critical presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. It reflects the confidence placed in your country and in your professionalism. You can count on our support in making the work of the current session a success and in upholding the values of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, as well as respecting the rules of procedure.

With regard to paragraph 105 and the inclusion of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly, the Islamic Republic of Iran shall vote against it, not because we oppose the basic ideas contained in the concept, but to draw the attention of the Member States to the serious risk of biased interpretations and applications of R2P.

We would like to reaffirm Iran’s unwavering commitment to the noble goal of the protection of civilians. Needless to say, every State bears that responsibility vis-à-vis its own population. By no means does that imply permission for States to use force against other States, under any pretext, such as humanitarian or pre-emptive interventions.

In fact, the actions and inactions of the proponents of R2P in the past have not been consistent with the

alleged objectives and purposes of this initiative. In theory, it seems that the protection of people should be at the centre of R2P. However, we have witnessed that, in practice, R2P is guided by the politicized interests of States rather than by respect for human dignity and human rights. As such, R2P has been applied in a selective manner. Its selective application has called into question its legitimacy and validity as a principle of international law.

Moreover, the abuse of R2P on political grounds in the past has brought disastrous results and has therefore reduced this initiative to being a tool at the service of certain Powers. That, in turn, has strengthened doubts regarding its future applicability and success.

It is obvious that the inaction of the international community in the face of humanitarian tragedies should not be attributed to the absence of normative frameworks or the lack of implementation of R2P. The horrible genocide in Rwanda serves as a clear example of such inaction by the Security Council due to the lack of political will of some of its permanent members.

With that in mind, the question arises as to how some R2P proponents that recognize R2P as a legal principle are going to fulfil their obligations pertaining to the protection of populations while simultaneously selling their arms, having prior knowledge or experience and being almost certain that those arms will eventually end up being used to target civilians and civilian objects and will ultimately lead to war crimes and crimes against humanity, killing innocent civilians.

Considering the legal gaps and differences on the concept, we are of the view that formal discussion in the General Assembly is not an appropriate format to address conceptual differences among Member States. We reiterate our call that prior to the implementation of R2P, it is crucial to define its normative contents, as well as its scope of application through holding informal interactive dialogue, as agreed in 2009.

Finally, the only way to restore R2P and its legitimacy is to abolish selectivity in way that genuinely addresses the plight of humankind whenever it faces atrocity crimes, in full conformity with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Addressing the misery of people under foreign occupation is the most immediate litmus test for R2P.

Ms. Wegter (Denmark): Allow me, initially, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to

preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. We look forward to working under your stewardship.

I will be brief. Denmark, together with Costa Rica, Croatia, Guatemala, Nigeria, Qatar, Romania, Ukraine and Uruguay, requested, during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, that this agenda item be included in the draft agenda of this, the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. Just two weeks ago, with the greatest support to date, a very large majority of the General Assembly supported the inclusion of the agenda item, just like in 2017, 2018 and 2019 — with the same small group of countries opposed to the inclusion.

Respect for the decisions of the General Assembly is the bedrock of this institution and a precondition for its ability to deliver results. This item has already been decided on, so today we simply ask the members of the Assembly to respect the decision it has already taken once. We understand that delegations have diverging views on the substance of this agenda item, but we fail to understand why dialogue and debate in the General Assembly are not the way forward to bridge the gap.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Ukraine is one of the countries that has continuously supported the consideration of the item “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” by the General Assembly. I am confident that only by listening to one another can we reach a solution, enhance the protection of people and prevent atrocity crimes.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we did not discuss many agenda items, including the responsibility to protect (R2P) at the previous session. In that regard, Ukraine supports the retention of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, as was already decided by the Assembly on 4 September and recommended by the General Committee of the current session just two days ago.

Ukraine is a party to the core instruments of international law relating to the prevention of atrocity crimes, the protection of populations, upholding human rights and eliminating all forms of discrimination. We believe that the strengthened and improved awareness of the States Members of the United Nations regarding the risks of atrocity crimes, recommendations to prevent such crimes and mechanisms to support such steps could greatly enhance the Assembly’s ability to

take fair, just, efficient and results-oriented decisions in the proper implementation of R2P.

We hope that further discussion of R2P will be helpful in order to overcome the persistent gap between the commitments and actions of some Member States. Amid the clear wish of the Assembly to have the item on its agenda, the state of perplexity of the delegation that requested the recorded vote is a regrettable example of shenanigans that have no chance of succeeding in the Assembly. We therefore encourage all Member States to vote in favour of the item “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As is well known, elements of the concept of the responsibility to protect are reflected in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, which was adopted by consensus.

Three years ago, a group of States decided to break the consensus. Today, instead of engaging in productive informal discussions, what we see is mistrust and disagreement. The noble objective of protecting people from the most heinous crimes has, due to the efforts of some, morphed into a pretext for intervening into the domestic affairs of States. Existing disagreements can hardly be resolved by the ritualistic inclusion of this item in the official agenda of the General Assembly. What is needed is dialogue. We already have sufficient items on the agenda to shed light on the depth of disagreement.

We therefore call for restoring the previous format of work — informal interactive discussions. We believe that the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the seventy-fifth session will not do any good for this concept.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on the recommendation by the General Committee for the inclusion of item 136, “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, in the agenda of the current session.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Belarus, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Gabon, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Yemen

The recommendation of the General Committee to include item 136 of the draft agenda, entitled “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, was approved by 101 votes to 13, with 22 abstentions.

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that

explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): My delegation abstained in the voting on this issue for the reasons that we elaborated in the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on 4 September (see A/74/PV.63) on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Ms. Ali (Singapore): My delegation wishes to take the floor to make an explanation of vote after the voting on the inclusion of the agenda item of “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”. Singapore abstained in the voting.

The concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) clearly continues to divide Member States. The vote on 4 September (see A/74/PV.63) and today in the General Assembly indicates clearly that the divisions are deep. In such a context, we think that it is important to build trust and confidence through an informal dialogue in order to gradually build some common understanding.

Three years ago, at the start of the seventy-second session, when including this item in the General Assembly’s agenda first came up, its proponents provided clear assurance that their request for inclusion of this item was a one-off and that the item would be included in the agenda of the seventy-second session only (see A/72/PV.2). We were therefore surprised that this agenda item was introduced repeatedly at the seventy-third, seventy-fourth and, now, the seventy-fifth sessions.

Singapore has always attached great importance to dialogue and discussion. However, in our view, a formal debate is not always the best way to build trust and confidence. We believe that an informal dialogue can be more helpful in building trust and understanding and allowing for a candid exchange of views. We therefore regret that this agenda has become an annual ritual that only serves to deepen divisions in the General Assembly.

Let me conclude with a final point. Any dialogue — formal or informal — must be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. This dialogue must also be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and mutual understanding and with sensitivity to the differences of views among Member States. In particular, we should avoid going in

the direction of country-specific resolutions, as such an approach will not help to build confidence or consensus.

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

In paragraph 106, in connection with item 181 of the draft agenda, “Observer status for the Small Island Developing States Dock (SIDS DOCK) in the General Assembly”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 107, in connection with item 182 of the draft agenda, “Observer status for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute in the General Assembly”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 108, in connection with item 183 of the draft agenda, “Observer status for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization in the General Assembly”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 109, in connection with item 184 of the draft agenda, “Observer status for the Global Dryland Alliance in the General Assembly”, the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 110 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda. Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole.

I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to include these items in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, “Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences”. May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to heading B, “Maintenance of international peace and security”.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position before the taking of action on the General Committee’s recommendation, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Knyazyan (Armenia): My delegation would like to disassociate itself from the consensus to include item 40 in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session.

The President: May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading C, “Development of Africa”. May I take it that the items listed under heading C are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, “Promotion of human rights”. May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled “Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts”. May I take it that the items listed under heading E are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading F, “Promotion of justice and international law”. May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to heading G, “Disarmament”. May I take it that the items listed under heading G are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled “Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations”. May I take it that the items listed under heading H are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, “Organizational, administrative and other matters”. May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee on allocation of items. The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 111 to 113. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 113 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 115 to 119. We shall take up the recommendations paragraph by paragraph.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 110 of the report of the General Committee before us. We shall now turn to paragraphs 115 (a) to (j), relating to a number of plenary items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all the information of which the General Committee took note and approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 115 (a) to (j)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraphs 116 (a) to (c), relating to the First Committee. May I take

it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 116 (a) to (c)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraphs 117 (a) and (b), relating to the Second Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 117 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraphs 118 (a) and (b), relating to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 118 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraphs 119 (a) to (e), relating to the Sixth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 119 (a) to (e)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 120 of the report of the General Committee on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee. We turn first to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for consideration in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We come next to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation

of the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, 43/177, of 15 December 1988, 52/250, of 7 July 1998, 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and 73/5, of 16 October 2018, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, representatives of the European Union will participate in the work of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I call on the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): I would like to make a brief comment on the work of the General Committee. Liechtenstein very much welcomes that the General Committee is back to formal, in-person meetings after months of operating in informal work mode owing to the coronavirus disease pandemic. We also very much welcome that the General Committee is now again conducting its work in strict compliance with its mandate, based on the rules of procedure, and the President's clear position in this respect is very much appreciated.

In parallel, it is of paramount importance that the working methods of the General Committee also go back to established practice and previous levels of transparency and inclusiveness, including regarding attendance and speaking rights of observers. This is a crucial element of legitimacy for the General Committee's work, and we hope that established practice from before the pandemic will be fully reinstated from the next meeting of the Committee onwards. The commitment expressed by the President to that effect is very welcome.

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to call the attention of members to the letter circulated yesterday, 17 September 2020, which has information concerning the occupational safety and health plan for this session, including the possible follow-up in the unfortunate and, we hope, unlikely event of cases of coronavirus disease.

Following the arrangement in recent meetings, the Secretariat will actively manage the exit by calling each row for departure in a staggered manner. Members are therefore requested to remain seated after the adjournment of the meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.