



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

96th plenary meeting
Thursday, 29 July 2021, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 31, 64 and 116 (continued)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/75/747)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/75/735)

Mr. Zellenrath (Netherlands): I thank the President of the General Assembly for reconvening this joint debate on the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) (A/75/747) and on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) (A/75/735).

Let me start by thanking all the members of the PBC for their hard work over the past year, which proved to be one of the most active years so far, even in the face of the pandemic. Our thanks certainly also go to Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his team for their outstanding work, as well as to Canada for chairing the Peacebuilding Commission last year, their very substantive programme of work and their inspiring commitment to inclusivity.

As many speakers said this morning (see A/75/PV.95), the PBC and its cross-pillar mandate has proven to be a key addition to the capacity of the international community in advancing the broad peace agenda. As a flexible, demand-driven platform for the coordination and advocacy of peacebuilding, the PBC is now more important than ever.

The Netherlands joined the PBC this year under the strong leadership of Egypt. In that regard, I applaud the personal commitment of Ambassador Mohamed Edrees. Our focus is on just and inclusive peace, with mental health and psychosocial support and inclusive justice as fundamental elements for sustainable peace.

Financing is another of our focus areas. I would like to underline what previous speakers said about adequate financing. The world spends so much more of its resources on fixing conflicts after they occur than on investing to prevent those conflicts from occurring in the first place, or reoccurring later. We all know the financial, human, economic and environmental costs of conflict, which are staggering. That is why we must do more to ensure sustainable and predictable financing for our peacebuilding efforts.

That brings me to the Peacebuilding Fund. I am proud to say that the Netherlands is one of the top donors to the PBF, having contributed a total of €40 million in 2020 and 2021. The PBF has unique value in achieving peacebuilding results, both through the quality of the funded programmes and through its role in bringing together peacebuilding actors at the country level. We are particularly pleased by the attention that the PBF

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is currently giving to mental health and psychosocial support. We cannot build peace on broken minds. It is good that more and more efforts are being directed at that crucial element of peacebuilding.

However, the Peacebuilding Fund is currently significantly underfunded. I would like to call on all States that have not yet done so to consider making a contribution to that highly relevant Fund. We look forward to further discussions on financing for peacebuilding in the coming months in preparation for the high-level event on financing for peacebuilding.

In conclusion, peacebuilding is a long-term and collaborative process. Members can count on the continued support of my delegation for the efforts of both the PBC and the PBF in that regard.

Mr. Nayan (Philippines): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's joint debate on the two key components of the peacebuilding architecture, namely, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). We welcome the comprehensive reports of the PBC (A/75/747) and on the PBF (A/75/735). We also appreciate the leadership of the former and current Chairs of the PBC, Canada and Egypt, respectively, as well as the outstanding work of Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his team at the Peacebuilding Support Office.

Since 2014, the Philippines has benefited from the Peacebuilding Fund, along with partners from the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the United Nations Development Programme, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the International Organization for Migration and UN-Women. In coordination with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, those pooled resources were instrumental in building the capacities of the State and our non-State partners to sustain and nurture peace through a more inclusive peace process characterized by an all-Moro dialogue and consensus.

In keeping with the commitment of the Administration of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to bring just and lasting peace to the southern Philippines, we continue to follow a peace and development road map for the Bangsamoro peace process that is inclusive, participatory and conflict-, culture- and gender-sensitive. Over the years, the Government of the Philippines has been focused on sustaining the gains of the Bangsamoro peace process by recognizing the

vital role of its partners and actively engaging them in dialogue.

Since it was first introduced in 2005, the concept of a peacebuilding architecture has evolved from an afterthought in the peace continuum to a principle that flows through all United Nations engagements, whether in terms of preventive action, peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict recovery or reconstruction. Today it stands as the most essential component of the United Nations in fulfilling the Organization's purpose to save humankind from the scourge of war.

The Philippines will continue to contribute meaningfully to that important endeavour. We welcome opportunities to leverage nationally owned peacebuilding initiatives to secure additional funding, including from key international financial institutions. We are convinced that United Nations peacekeeping operations must be informed by the priorities and strategic guidance of national authorities, as well as regional stakeholders. We strongly advocate that women's political participation and leadership be expanded beyond the peace table.

In response to the call of the Secretary-General for a quantum leap of support to the Fund and to strengthen the ability of the United Nations system to invest in peacebuilding, the Philippines contributed \$50,000 to the PBF for the year 2021.

The success of the peacebuilding architecture will not be determined by the number of Member States requesting its institutional assistance through the Peacebuilding Fund, but by the added value it provides in supporting countries in their efforts to sustain peace and build inclusive and prosperous societies.

Mr. Hitti (Lebanon): We thank Ambassador Robert Rae, former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for presenting the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/75/747) and commend him and his predecessor, Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard, as well as their teams, on their leadership during the year 2020, which was full of extraordinary challenges.

We also seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the excellent work being carried out by the current Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Mohamed Edrees of Egypt, and his team. As a new member of the Commission in 2021, the delegation of Lebanon reiterates its continued support to the current Chair.

We join others in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their fundamental role in assisting the PBC.

In our efforts in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the preventive dimension must be continuously strengthened. Lebanon has consistently called for addressing the root causes of conflict, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting human rights and enhancing inclusion.

In that regard, Lebanon values the increased efforts of the Commission in supporting the women and peace and security agenda in line with the PBC gender strategy. My delegation appreciates the role of the Commission and its support to the youth and peace and security agenda, as well as its call for the greater inclusion of youth representatives and coalitions and partnerships that aim to support peacebuilding initiatives and processes.

In the same vein, we are of the view that, as an advisory body, the PBC could scale up its work on the impact of climate change. It is indisputable that climate change is already posing a security threat in many parts of the world and is a security threat multiplier.

We thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/75/735). Lebanon is grateful to the donors that have supported the Fund. As rightly voiced by others this morning (see A/75/PV.95), the necessity of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding cannot be stressed enough in our efforts towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is worth noting in that regard the importance of enlarging the pool of contributions to the PBC. The Commission should do more to engage new potential donors and tap into innovative ways to secure financing, such as through the private sector.

It is ever more relevant today to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, as the Secretary-General noted in his report, in order to effectively contribute to recovering better.

We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission, the role of which has grown considerably since its inception, would benefit from having more of its meetings open to the wider membership, as echoed by other speakers this morning. Outside expertise could further enlighten discussions; therefore, the PBC should continue to invite more participation by voices from the field, as

they enrich discussions and add first-hand knowledge of problems.

In conclusion, the PBC would benefit from enhancing its communication outside the sphere of the United Nations.

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

Ms. Mohammed (African Union): It is a pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the African Union (AU) at this annual joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its fourteenth session (A/75/747) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/75/735).

I also wish to acknowledge the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Gambia on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/75/PV.95).

The African Union welcomes the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as conflict prevention and peacebuilding are key to sustaining peacebuilding in Africa, anchored on the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture and complemented by three important policy frameworks: the AU policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development; Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, our development agenda; and the AU master road map for silencing the guns. All of those contribute towards enhancing our global peacebuilding architecture.

While recognizing the achievements made over the past year, permit me to make the following three observations.

On financing, the AU particularly welcomes the decision of the PBC to focus its annual session on financing and recognizes the gains made to date in terms of financing in response to the two resolutions on peacebuilding adopted in December 2020 (General Assembly resolution 75/201 and Security Council resolution 2558 (2020)). The achievements of the PBC have been enabled considerably by the Peacebuilding Fund. The tangible benefits of the Peacebuilding Fund's support in strengthening the rule of law, security, governance and many of our institutions have been critical for peacebuilding efforts in countries on the agenda of the PBC and beyond.

Given the catalytic role of the PBC, which is limited to transitional phases, there is an urgent need for

increased and sustainable funding for medium-to-long-term development. Long-term, sustainable funding is needed to complete the projects and programmes funded by the Peacebuilding Fund so as to ensure that those projects do not fall into despair after PBF funding ends. In that vein, we echo the call of the Secretary-General in his report for Member States to reaffirm their confidence in the Fund and translate their stated commitments into meaningful support to ensure that the United Nations and its partners can contribute effectively to recovering better and sustaining peace during the challenging times imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

In the Common African Position on the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the AU noted that financing remains a gap in our peacebuilding efforts. The AU recalled the Secretary-General's proposal in 2018 (see A/72/207) for diversifying sources of financing for peacebuilding by mobilizing resources from Member States, foundations and the private sector as a forward-looking initiative that should be scaled up. The proposals offered a wide range of innovative options for financing peacebuilding.

However, the Secretary-General noted in his present report that financing for peacebuilding has registered limited progress, which the AU is convinced is due not so much to lack of proposals but to limited political will. In that vein, the AU looks forward to continuing its engagement with the United Nations, the Secretary-General and other senior leaders from relevant organizations to come up with sustainable and predictable funding frameworks for peacebuilding.

Secondly, on thematic issues, the AU welcomes the increase of the Commission's efforts on cross-cutting and thematic issues. We are also pleased by its increased support for the women and peace and security agenda, as set out in its gender strategy, as well as the promotion of gender-responsive peacebuilding, particularly through engagement with women peacebuilders. In addition, the Commission's focus on promoting greater inclusivity, including among youth peacebuilders as agents of positive change and participants in relevant decision-making processes, should be commended.

Thirdly, in terms of partnerships, the AU welcomes the Commission's proactive engagement with various partners across the board, including civil society, regional and subregional organizations and international financial institutions. The AU is honoured

to have increased its participation in the Commission's country-specific, regional and thematic engagements, including through consultative exchanges with the AU Peace and Security Council. The 2020 review offered us an excellent opportunity to renew our commitment to peacebuilding. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for a stronger multilateral approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Permit me to conclude by expressing my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Edrees, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and wish him a successful tenure. I would also like to recognize the work and achievements of the Permanent Representative of Canada, His Excellency Mr. Robert Rae, and his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Marc-André Blanchard, as the previous Chairs of the PBC, and thank them for their exceptional commitment during their chairmanship. Last but certainly not least, we commend Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his team for their dedication and continued commitment to providing the necessary support through the Peacebuilding Support Office, despite the challenges and restrictions posed by COVID-19.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the joint debate on these items.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 31, 64 and 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 36

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Draft resolution (A/75/L.113)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.113.

Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the representative of the country that holds the current chairmanship of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.113, the text of which is based on resolutions 61/294, 65/121 and 69/322, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in September 2007, December 2010 and September 2015, respectively, while also incorporating relevant technical updates.

The draft resolution reaffirms the role of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic as a forum for greater interaction and support among its member States, namely, those African and South American States bordering the South Atlantic, which seek to promote and develop opportunities for cooperation in the various fields identified in the Montevideo Plan of Action adopted in January 2013. Those areas of cooperation include seabed mapping and exploration, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its resources, air and maritime transport, the fight against organized crime, peacekeeping and trade facilitation, *inter alia*.

In that regard, on behalf of the members of the Zone, I invite the various organizations, bodies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other bilateral institutions and actors, to support the efforts of the countries of the Zone to implement its objectives, in particular those of the Montevideo Plan of Action.

Finally, I would like to point out that Uruguay, like other States members of the Zone, is committed to the revitalization process of that zone of peace and cooperation and is grateful for the support of all delegations for the draft resolution, especially its co-sponsors.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Thirty-five years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/11, declaring the Atlantic Ocean in the region situated between Africa and South America a zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. Since then, the countries of the region have held seven ministerial meetings, as well as several other meetings and events at the technical level, in order to strengthen their ties and promote cooperation in areas such as global governance, socioeconomic development, disarmament, peace and security, defence, sustainable development, oceans and marine resources and transnational crime.

The commitments adopted in the past few decades by the countries that are members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic reflect the economic, political and strategic importance of the South Atlantic region for its coastal States. We hope that our joint endeavour will continue to increase mutual exchanges between the African and South American peoples.

Brazil congratulates Uruguay for its commendable initiative to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.113 at a time when the global context teaches us that

cooperation is, now more than ever, the main path to overcoming our common challenges. The adoption of the draft resolution will represent the affirmation by the General Assembly of the principles that have guided the members of the Zone since its inception.

I would like to express Brazil's appreciation to the Government of Cabo Verde, which has offered to host the next ministerial meeting of the Zone. The prompt holding of the eighth ministerial meeting of the Zone will be fundamental in deepening its activities and the effective implementation of its objectives.

As we take action on the draft resolution before us and initiate a new cycle in the Zone of Peace and Cooperation, there is one topic that my delegation would like to highlight — the promotion of responsible navigation. Brazil is of the view that, although each country has the primary responsibility for ensuring the sustainable use and conservation of its marine resources, it is essential to promote responsible navigation on the oceans through the expansion of measures capable of preventing and facilitating the investigation of serious incidents of marine pollution.

Experience proves that cooperation and exchange of information are among the most efficient tools for a safer marine environment. In a broader context, and in preparing the way for an in-depth analysis of the topic of responsible navigation, Brazil convened a series of discussions among the members of the Zone, notably its first seminar on safety and surveillance of maritime traffic search and rescue, held in 2013; a seminar on peacekeeping operations, held in 2015; a seminar on safety and security in the South Atlantic, held in 2019, and a webinar entitled "Contribution of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic to Economic Development and Maritime Security in the South Atlantic", held virtually last October.

In conclusion, we are convinced that the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic will continue to play its role in preventing the militarization of the South Atlantic and promoting cooperation and development among its members.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina is proud to co-sponsor draft resolution A/75/L.113, which was introduced by the representative of Uruguay, for which I would also like to thank Uruguay.

We do so convinced of the importance and relevance of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the

South Atlantic, an initiative founded in 1986 at the behest of Brazil, with the support of Argentina and Uruguay. Our active participation in the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic attests to our commitment to the universal values of international peace and security and sustainable development in the southern hemisphere.

Argentina views the South Atlantic as a geostrategic space, given the importance of its inestimable natural resources for the sustainable development of the countries in Latin America and Africa that are members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic.

The South Atlantic is also crucial to understanding the effects of climate change at the global level. The members of the Zone share a common perspective on the sustainable development of our seaward-facing societies. We are committed to deepening our political and economic cooperation on ocean issues, including through tools such as South-South cooperation. We view cooperation as a forum for exchange, in which all participants can learn from each other, moving beyond traditional vertical cooperation.

In 2020, Argentina's launch of Pampa Azul — a multidisciplinary strategic initiative designed to promote scientific knowledge as the essential basis for ocean policy decisions — provided us with an opportunity to strengthen the ties of cooperation on ocean issues in our region. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, with the involvement of seven other ministries, including the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship.

Strengthening cooperation among the countries of the Zone in activities related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development can deepen relations among countries on both sides of the Atlantic and enhance the contribution of the countries of the South to the knowledge and understanding of those vast areas within the United Nations system.

The Montevideo Declaration, adopted in 2013 at the seventh ministerial meeting of the Zone, reflected the converging views among members with regard to issues that remain extremely sensitive, such as the need to continue working towards a swift and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

At that meeting, members of the Zone expressed their concern about ongoing situations that have an adverse effect on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of some of its member States, such as the question of the Malvinas Islands, which affects Argentina's territorial integrity. We therefore support their efforts to promote the principle of dispute resolution always by peaceful means and to seek negotiated solutions to territorial conflicts that may affect them, in line with international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly and its Special Committee on Decolonization.

The status conferred on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is of singular importance — not only as a zone of peace and cooperation but also as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, reflecting the principles of peace and security that led to the establishment of the United Nations itself and the various regional and subregional organizations to which the member States of the Zone belong. Argentina would therefore like to recall resolution 41/11, which calls upon all States of all other regions, in particular the militarily significant States, scrupulously to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a Zone of Peace and Cooperation, especially through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there and the non-introduction of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, we are grateful for the support this regional initiative will receive. It enjoys the support and commitment of countries on both sides of the South Atlantic with regard to social and economic development and full respect for human rights, international law and international peace and security.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.113, entitled “Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/75/L.113 and in addition to the delegation listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.113: Angola, Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Costa

Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia, Nigeria, Panama, the Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Turkmenistan.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.113?

Draft resolution A/75/L.113 was adopted (resolution 75/312).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): It is a pity to have to take the floor in this way and that my colleague from Argentina has used the issue of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic to restate her country's erroneous claims to the Falkland Islands.

I have to insist that the United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and surrounding maritime areas, or about the principle and the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

That means there can be no dialogue on sovereignty unless the Falkland Islanders so wish. The 2013 referendum, in which 99.8 per cent of the people of the Falkland Islands voted in favour of maintaining the current status of that territory as a territory of the United Kingdom, sent a clear message that they do not want dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes.

The United Kingdom's relationship with the Falkland Islands and all of its overseas territories is a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to determine their future.

I agreed with much of what my colleague from Argentina said about climate, the value of science and the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals,

but it was a pity that she had to use this subject matter to restate that claim.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In response to what was said by the representative of the United Kingdom on the question of the Malvinas Islands, my delegation wishes to underscore the statement delivered by the President of the Argentine Republic to the General Assembly on 22 September 2020 (see A/75/PV.5).

The Argentine Government recalls that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas are an integral part of Argentina's national territory, which are illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and are the subject of a sovereignty dispute between both countries, as has been recognized by various international organizations.

The United Kingdom's illegal occupation of the Malvinas Islands led the General Assembly to adopt 10 resolutions on the matter, beginning with resolution 2065 (XX). Those resolutions recognize the existence of the sovereignty dispute and urge the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to reach a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible.

For its part, the Special Committee on Decolonization has addressed the issue on numerous occasions, most recently through the adoption of a resolution on 24 June. Moreover, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States adopted a new statement on the issue using similar terms on 21 October 2020.

Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of peoples, upon which the United Kingdom bases its refusal to resume negotiations, cannot be applied to the sovereignty dispute between the two countries regarding the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Decolonization.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting, on 18 September 2020, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 to the Second Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft decision submitted under that sub-item, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided (decision 75/504 B).

Agenda item 23 (continued)**Groups of countries in special situations****(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries****Draft decision (A/75/L.122)**

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/75/L.122 entitled “Extension of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries”.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/75/L.122?

Draft decision A/75/L.122 was adopted (decision 75/574).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23.

Agenda item 103 (continued)**General and complete disarmament****Draft decision (A/75/L.118)**

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia to introduce draft decision A/75/L.118.

Mr. Vorshilov (Mongolia): First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all States Members and observers of the United Nations that are parties or signatories to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties for their valuable support in preparation for

the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia. We also thank them for their active participation in the informal consultations.

During our informal consultations, which were held on 22 June, States requested that any changes to the date of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia remain tied to the date of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). During the informal virtual consultations held on 13 July, the States parties to the NPT agreed to release the tentative date of August 2021 for the tenth NPT Review Conference. While it is increasingly unlikely that the Review Conference will be held in August 2021, the final decision on a new date has yet to be taken.

In that regard, Mongolia, in its capacity as a coordinator of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, introduces to the General Assembly draft decision A/75/L.118, postponing the Conference to a later date to be decided by the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, the text of which was agreed by participating Member States on 22 June. I call upon those Member States to support and co-sponsor the draft decision.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/75/L.118, entitled “Fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision without a vote?

Draft decision A/75/L.118 was adopted (decision 75/575).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 103.

Agenda item 128 (continued)**Strengthening of the United Nations system****(a) Strengthening of the United Nations system****Draft resolution (A/75/L.117)**

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.117.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (spoke in Russian): The delegation of Turkmenistan has the honour to introduce

draft resolution A/75/L.117, entitled “Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to ensure stable and reliable international transport for sustainable development during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”.

Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Turkmenistan, to thank all delegations for the constructive and fruitful negotiations that resulted in a substantive text. We note with satisfaction the broad international support for the draft resolution and the fact that, in addition to Turkmenistan, more than 39 States have become co-sponsors. Throughout the negotiating process on the draft resolution, we made every effort to maintain a constructive atmosphere and achieve consensus.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious challenge the world has faced in generations. Many individuals and communities continue to be severely affected by both the disease and its economic and social consequences. The year 2020 marked the beginning of the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult to achieve those Goals in a timely manner.

At a time of unprecedented crisis, international cooperation is needed now more than ever and in a variety of ways, such as the exchange of national experiences and mutual assistance in order to overcome the negative consequences of the coronavirus disease on our health, social and economic spheres. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of ensuring seamless global, regional and interregional transport links and maintaining the effective functioning of key sectors of the economy — as well as trade, energy and investment — to address a wide range of social and economic issues and ensure adequate standards of living for all population groups of Member States.

Efficient transportation infrastructure and initiatives are becoming increasingly important to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. If we wish to improve our recovery processes, we need to accelerate investments in sustainable infrastructure, which affects the achievement of more than 90 per cent of the SDGs. Transportation is one such area, as it plays a key role in delivering basic necessities and aid, including medical supplies and food, to countries and regions affected by COVID-19.

In that regard, Turkmenistan advocates for the consistent development of transport and trade links, including cooperation mechanisms, as well as the implementation of the principles of modernization, harmonization and digitalization in the fields of transport, logistics and the management of trade supply chains at both the regional and international levels.

The draft resolution we have introduced focuses on the urgent practical challenges facing people today. For example, it recommends that Governments pay equal attention to both long- and short-term transportation plans, with an emphasis on resolving immediate problems such as providing first aid and medical supplies to populations. It also underscores the need to promote the digitalization of global supply chains, including blockchain technology, as the shortest and fastest way to simplify border-crossing procedures by reducing corruption and long delays at borders. The creation of such multimodal digital corridors is particularly important for landlocked developing countries and least developed countries.

The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of international cooperation among relevant modes of transport and transport-related industries in order to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the exchange of information, scientific knowledge, best practices and experiences in the implementation of national transport programmes and strategies. It is essential to promote the development of a sustainable transport sector that contributes to the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development and minimizes negative impacts in that regard.

We are confident that, if adopted, the draft resolution will provide more opportunities to strengthen and further develop one of the basic elements of sustainable development, namely, all forms of reliable and safe transport. We call upon all countries to support the draft resolution and join the list of co-sponsors, which will give added impetus to our shared efforts in the transport sphere.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.117, entitled “Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve stable and reliable international transport for sustainable development during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/75/L.117 and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.117: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Niger, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.117?

Draft resolution A/75/L.117 was adopted (resolution 75/313).

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

Mr. Walter (United States of America): The United States would first like to commend Turkmenistan for its hard work in facilitating the negotiation of the text of resolution 75/313 and navigating us towards a consensus-based conclusion.

With regard to paragraph 14 of resolution 75/313, the United States recognizes the role of the United Nations and individual Governments in supporting efforts to improve the resilience of transport systems. However, we want to reiterate our position that the United Nations should ensure that it does not inappropriately promote single Member State signature international initiatives. In that regard, we interpret paragraph 14 as recognizing the separate work streams, and not as endorsing United Nations cooperation on single country-led mechanisms or initiatives.

Mr. Sharma (India): We thank the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan, the facilitator of negotiations on resolution 75/313, for all its efforts. While we

joined the consensus today on the resolution, I would like to give an explanation of position on behalf of my delegation.

India shares the international community's desire to enhance physical connectivity and believes that it should bring greater economic benefits to all in an equitable and balanced manner. Strengthening connectivity links acquires particular salience in the context of post-coronavirus disease economic recovery.

The expansion and strengthening of connectivity is an integral part of India's economic and diplomatic initiatives. Efforts have been made to strengthen transport links with India's immediate and extended neighbourhood through activities such as upgrading port, rail and airport infrastructure, laying new pipelines, building electricity networks and reinvigorating people-to-people exchanges.

Under our Neighbourhood First Policy, we are developing multimodal linkages with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and other countries. Under our Act East Policy, we are pursuing the trilateral highway project. We are also engaged with Iran on the Chabahar project and with partners in Central Asia on the International North-South Transport Corridor. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal's initiative is aimed at enhancing logistics and efficiency in the South Asian region.

The challenge we face is that politics, vested interests and unsustainability can serve as formidable impediments to the realization of stable and reliable international transport. We are of the view that, in order to strengthen links between modes of transport, certain prerequisites are required to make such activities sustainable from all angles.

First, connectivity efforts must be based on the principles of economic viability and financial responsibility. They should promote economic activity and should not create unsustainable debt burdens for communities, while balancing ecological and environmental protection and preservation standards. The transparent assessment of project costs and skill and technology transfers will contribute to the long-term operation and maintenance of the assets created by local communities.

Secondly, such initiatives should always adhere to common and universally applicable rules and uphold

the principles of good governance, the rule of law, transparency and equality.

Thirdly, connectivity initiatives that straddle national boundaries must be pursued in a manner that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.

Fourthly, our focus should be on enhancing connectivity in a way that promotes cooperation and engagement and does not lead to conflict and tensions.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after adoption.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 126 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Second Committee (A/75/467/Add.1)

The Acting President: The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. Therefore, if there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided (decision 75/548B).

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee.”

May I further remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Second Committee, I should like to advise representatives that

we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

We will now take action on the draft decision entitled “Revitalization of the work of the Second Committee”. The Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 75/548 B).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 126.

Agenda items 7 and 70 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Draft resolution (A/75/L.119, as orally revised) and draft amendment (A/75/L.121)

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/75/L.119, as orally revised in the letter from the President of the General Assembly dated 29 July 2021, and a draft amendment contained in document A/75/L.121, issued under sub-item (b) of agenda item 70, entitled “Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Ms. Nemroff (United States of America): I would like to just point out that there were two oral amendments circulated this morning by the President of the General Assembly. There was also, we understand, an amendment (A/75/L.121/Rev.1) to the amendment (A/75/L.121) that had already been submitted in writing. It is not clear that Member States have had sufficient time to review those amendments, with either other delegations or, let alone, their capitals, and I say

this as a delegation that is on the same time zone as its capital. We would therefore ask to consider a delay in action on the adoption of this very important draft resolution (A/75/L.119), given that the issues that have been raised in the oral amendments are quite important not only to the formation of the forum but also to its future operation. We want to make sure that there is as common an understanding as possible among delegations about what they mean.

The Acting President: The representative of the United States of America has proposed that the consideration of both draft resolution A/75/L.119 and draft amendment A/75/L.121 be postponed to a later date.

Mr. Nze (Nigeria): Let me first and foremost thank the representative of the United States of America for what she said. My delegation wants to reject the proposal of the United States because the status of draft resolution A/75/L.119 has long been pending for four months. We think that the delay in deferring action on this draft resolution is not in the best interests of anyone. We believe that this is part of the tactics employed by some delegations to tactically and technically kill this draft resolution. We therefore reject the proposal. Instead, we should proceed with the adoption of the draft resolution. Otherwise, we can always go for a vote.

Mrs. Košir (Slovenia): On behalf of the European Union and its member States, we would like to express our agreement with the United States that more time is needed to consider the importance of the substantial revisions proposed by the co-facilitators. For that reason, we would like to support the motion to postpone action on this item.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Costa Rica wishes to oppose the postponement requested by the delegation of the United States of America. As has already been said, draft resolution A/75/L.119 is long-standing and was submitted on time, in accordance with the applicable regulations for the consideration and negotiation by all delegations in many formal and informal meetings with various stages of revision of the draft text. We believe that the day of 28 July outlines the nature of the coming workdays of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

The time to act on this draft resolution is now. We should take action. It is a very important and a very cross-cutting draft resolution. It is a draft resolution

that is clearly part of the comprehensive discussion on the issue of racism in our world today. We cannot allow a decision on this to be taken yet such that we ask that the postponement requested by the United States not be accepted and that the draft resolution must be put to the vote.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): I want to just start by saying how much we appreciate the work that has been done by Chad and Costa Rica in facilitating draft resolution A/75/L.119. I also understand that when one is responsible for a text like this, as the Ambassador of Costa Rica is, why one would want to proceed as expeditiously as possible. But as my colleagues from the United States and Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, have both said, there have been a number of issues that even today we have been having further discussions on — at least three issues — and I, for one, do not feel that our delegation has had a chance to fully explore the implications of those issues with our capitals.

I would say, therefore, to the rest of the members of the Assembly that I do not think that there is any harm in us delaying a little while. I see on our agenda for today that we have a meeting on 17 August; that is just over two weeks away. It still sits comfortably within this session of the General Assembly, so if we could have a little bit more time, I think that would help us.

I would say to my colleague from Nigeria that no one has any intention of attempting to block this, and he should know that that would not in any way be possible. We simply want to make sure, as the Ambassador of Costa Rica said, that on such a significant, cross-cutting and important issue, we do not act with haste and that we get this right. So I respectfully ask if we could delay a little, perhaps until 17 August, so that we can get our house in full order.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): My delegation would like to extend our sincere appreciation to both co-facilitators of draft resolution A/75/L.119. My delegation believes that this draft is crucially important, and we support its aim. For that reason, although the views expressed by my delegation during the informal consultations are not fully reflected therein, we have exercised our best compromise to join in the consensus.

Having said that, as expressed by other delegations, we have concerns about the procedural aspects of the adoption of the draft at this time. Additional amendments, including the oral amendment just made,

put our delegation in a position that is a little bit difficult in terms of joining the consensus because of the lack of time to consult our capital; in particular, there are no programme budget implication elements. It would be difficult to proceed at this moment.

So, as suggested by others, we will continue to demonstrate a constructive engagement in this process. Having said that, we would like to suggest that we delay the adoption of the draft resolution so that we can have a little more time in order to agree on the text and ensure that it can be fully examined and refined through thorough deliberations among member States.

The Acting President: In the light of the objections made, I will now put to a recorded vote the proposal that the consideration of draft resolution A/75/L.119, as orally revised, and the draft amendment thereto (A/75/L.121) be postponed to a later date. We will now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago,

Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Iraq, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Solomon Islands, Togo, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

The proposal was rejected by 47 votes to 66, with 19 abstentions.

The Acting President: The proposal to defer consideration of draft resolution A/75/L.119 and the draft amendment thereto (A/75/L.121) is not adopted.

The General Assembly will proceed with the consideration of draft resolution A/75/L.119, as orally revised, and the draft amendment thereto. I will now suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 4.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

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

Ms. Nemroff (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again this afternoon given the lateness of the hour. I will be brief.

We would like to make a simple and straightforward request: to reallocate the consideration of draft resolution A/75/L.119 to sub-item (a) agenda item 70, entitled "Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". We are asking that the draft resolution be reallocated for consideration under sub-item (a) of agenda item 70 because we feel that would provide the broadest possible umbrella for mainstreaming the work of the permanent forum proposed in the draft resolution — not only in the General Assembly but in the United Nations system as a whole.

The permanent forum that we will establish today has many mothers and fathers throughout the General Assembly sessions and has been referred to under many different agenda items. Actions and decisions have been taken in that regard under many different agenda items, but we feel that sub-item (a) of agenda item 70 would provide the broadest possible platform for the

proposed permanent forum's work to be mainstreamed into the system.

The Acting President: The representative of the United States has proposed a draft oral amendment — that draft resolution A/75/L.119, as orally revised, be considered under sub-item (a) of agenda item 70, entitled “Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, rather than under sub-item (b) of agenda item 70, entitled “Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”.

I give the floor to the representative of Cuba on a point of order.

Mr. González Behmaras (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before taking a decision in that regard, in order to be duly informed of this last-minute change, my delegation would like to understand from the Secretariat the practical implications of changing the agenda item under which the draft resolution would be adopted. Then, on the basis of the Secretariat's response, we would perhaps be able to make an informed decision. I therefore request a response from the Secretariat before action is taken on the draft oral amendment proposed by the United States.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to advise the representative of Cuba that, if the draft oral amendment proposed by the United States is adopted by the General Assembly, the implication is that draft resolution A/75/L.119, which was issued under sub-item (b) of agenda item 70, will be considered under sub-item (a) of agenda item 70. That document, as orally revised, as announced in the President's letter this morning, as well as document A/75/L.121, submitted by Hungary, would be considered under sub-item (a) of agenda item 70, instead of sub-item (b) of agenda item 70. If the General Assembly adopts the proposed oral amendment, then the Assembly would proceed to reopen its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 70.

Ms. Charikhi (Algeria): My delegation had not expected to take the floor, as we understood that draft resolution A/75/L.119 was introduced, negotiated and informally agreed under sub-item (b) of agenda item 70. We therefore would like to request both delegations to provide further explanations.

Our understanding is that the proposed oral amendment would be substantial. The reason for that is the fact that the sub-item “Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action” has always been the sub-item under which the permanent forum proposed in draft resolution A/75/L.119 was to be established. Accordingly, I believe that changing the agenda sub-item would basically mean that the proposed permanent forum would no longer be part of our discussions under the Durban Declaration sub-item and would fall under another agenda sub-item, meaning that all the reports and recommendations to be provided by it would be allocated to another discussion.

As I understand it — that is why I request further explanation — the proposed oral amendment would mean that whatever the proposed permanent forum does would not be discussed or considered under the Durban Declaration sub-item but under the racism sub-item. That is a big change, which I believe the Assembly cannot make at this stage. I would welcome any further views and additional information from other delegations.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.45 p.m.

The Acting President: In the absence of a request for a recorded vote on the oral amendment, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the oral amendment proposed by the representative of the United States of America?

Mr. Nze (Nigeria): I take the floor on behalf of my delegation and the Group of African States. We do not agree with nor support the oral amendment proposed by the United States of America. I say that because if we consider rule 81 of the rules of procedure, when a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

The amendment raised requires a two-thirds majority to be adopted, since the General Assembly already allocated its agenda items during this session. We are reopening that decision for the second time, which I think is against the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. In that case, if the United States

insists on the oral amendment, then the African Group will request that the oral amendment be put to the vote.

Mr. González Behmaras (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to echo the remarks made by the delegation of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States. We reject the oral amendment proposed by the delegation of the United States for the reasons expressed by my colleague of the delegation of Nigeria, and also because of the substantive and potential consequences the United States proposal may have in the future, when considering agenda items related to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): Before I start, I just want to say categorically that the United Kingdom cares about this issue and thinks that it is an incredibly important issue, with which we need to deal very carefully and which we need to take incredibly seriously. It is very clear to me that, in this Hall this evening, this issue has become very highly charged. I would say that it is not the atmosphere in which the General Assembly can make the kind of progress and the kind of decisions that I know we would all wish to make. Just now, in a huddle, my excellent colleague from Cuba said that it feels like we all need a holiday. I am sure that is right, but he touched on something quite important, which is that we need to have real clarity of mind when we deal with issues like this. It is always good to pause, take a deep breath and reflect before moving forward on subjects like this. We need to do it dispassionately and carefully.

One of the things that strikes me in terms of the way in which we are approaching this at present is that we are talking about what the United States has asked for as an amendment to the draft text. I do not think that what is being proposed is an amendment to the draft text. I think that what is being asked for is consideration or a decision as to precisely where this issue should sit in the taxonomy of the General Assembly's work. I heard a number of representatives, both from the floor and in these small groups, express some confusion and ask for more information. I am very grateful to the Secretariat for the information that it has provided, but it is clear to me that it falls short of what we need to know before we can take a decision on this.

Let us be clear. As my Nigerian colleague just said, we are heading towards a vote on this highly charged issue. This General Assembly is heading to a vote. That is not a good place for us to be in. Before we head to a

vote that we might regret, can we therefore be clear on precisely what is being asked for and how it is being asked for? I think that my United States colleague is clear that she is not asking to amend the draft text in front of us.

Secondly, can we ask through you, Madam, for very clear legal advice before we move forward? I think that we need to be clear about the original context of this issue. The original decision was, as we know, under agenda item 66 (b), causes of conflict in Africa, I can see that that is not a desirable heading for this matter, but I would like to understand, and I would like legal advice from the Office of Legal Affairs, before we proceed on the matter as to what the implications of moving this issue from agenda item 70 (b) to agenda item 70 (a) are. I think that my African colleague also asked for clarity on that. What are the implications of doing that? I think that it would be in the interests of this General Assembly to step back to look at that legal advice to understand the implications of what we are being asked to decide before we take a vote on it. I think that our capitals would be dissatisfied, and mine would certainly be dissatisfied if I voted blind on an issue as significant as this.

I therefore respectfully ask you, Madam, to consult us before we move any further on the question of whether we, as the General Assembly, wish to seek that additional legal advice before moving forward, without prejudice to the decision that we took earlier. I am very grateful to everyone for their time.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Through you, Madam, I would like to respond to the question from the representative of the United Kingdom concerning a legal opinion. I would like to advise that a legal opinion of the Legal Counsel may be requested only by the Assembly itself. The Legal Counsel may not give an opinion at the request of a delegation or a group of delegations. A request for a legal opinion may be proposed by a delegation, in accordance with rule 78 of the rules of procedure, in the form of a draft decision or resolution that contains a clearly formulated question addressed to the Legal Counsel. That is my response through you, Madam, to the question from the representative of the United Kingdom concerning a legal opinion.

I would also like to advise through you, Madam, that at 6 p.m. the interpretation will not be available and the Assembly will have to adjourn at 6 p.m., that is, in four minutes.

The Acting President: I understand. I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Nze (Nigeria): I think that we do not need to repeat this issue. The point has been made. Article 81 is very clear to us that once two opposing voices have been heard, we pass straight to a vote. I spoke, as did my colleague from Cuba. I think that was enough to go for a vote without giving the representative of the United Kingdom the opportunity to speak, because that is part of the ploy to delay the process. Since two speakers spoke opposing the amendment, I think that it is enough to go to a vote.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): In respect to my Nigerian colleague, I am not trying to delay a decision on this. I am trying to make sure, as I said, that we all act with a full understanding of what it is that we are doing. I wonder if it would be possible for us to put before you, Madam, a short draft resolution, asking a specific question of the Office of Legal Affairs, and I asked the Secretariat if there was any reason that we could not do that. I am content to do it orally from the floor.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Nemroff (United States of America): I would actually like to hear the answer to the question that was posed by the United Kingdom delegation to the Secretariat. After that, I would request the floor to clarify what the United States delegation is actually proposing, which is not a substantive amendment to the draft text itself. It is a question about the allocation of the agenda item and a proposal that we are putting forward regarding the allocation of the agenda item. We can come back to that, but I would like to reiterate that I am interested in hearing the answer to the United Kingdom's question to the Secretariat.

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

Mr. González Behmaras (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation understands that, according to the rules of procedure, once a vote has been requested, whether it be on a draft resolution, a draft decision, a motion or any initiative, then a vote has to be held. The delegation of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and my delegation seconded that motion, requested that an initiative that had been put forward orally in the Hall be put to the vote. Therefore, a vote should be taken, and new initiatives and new interventions should not be made in order to continue to delay the process.

I reiterate that the Assembly has already decided not to postpone the consideration of the agenda item, whereby, before today's meeting ends, we are obliged to take a decision on the merits of the issue that we are considering. We would therefore prefer to avoid this kind of discussion and move directly to a vote on the oral amendment proposed by the United States.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the Secretariat to answer the questions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The representative of the United Kingdom asked if an oral proposal could be made for the General Assembly to request a legal opinion. Let me repeat from my original response that a legal opinion may be proposed by a delegation in the form of a draft decision or a draft resolution that contains a clearly formulated question addressed to the Legal Counsel. It would therefore have to be requested in writing.

Let me repeat that 6 p.m. has passed and the interpreters are being released, so I ask the Vice-President to adjourn the meeting.

The Acting President: In the light of the lateness of the hour, we have to adjourn this meeting, as the representative of the Secretariat has said. The General Assembly will revert to this question at a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.