



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

**99<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Monday, 30 August 2021, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Bozkir ..... (Turkey)

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

## Agenda item 14 (continued)

### Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

#### Draft resolutions (A/75/L.125 and A/75/L.126/ Rev.1)

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.125

**Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica, along with Mexico and Slovenia and supported by a large number of sponsors, is pleased to present to the General Assembly draft resolution A/75/L.125, entitled “World Wetlands Day”, which was developed as an effective follow-up to resolution XIII.1 of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, in which the Conference unanimously invited the United Nations to recognize 2 February of each year as World Wetlands Day.

Wetlands are vital to people and nature given their intrinsic value and the benefits and services that they provide, which can be measured in billions of dollars every year. Such ecosystems directly or indirectly supply the majority of fresh water in the world for both human and animal consumption and for irrigation.

They provide fertile areas for a wide range of crops, including rice, which is of crucial importance to a large part of humankind, fisheries and other sources of nutrition for billions of people who depend on those coastal wetlands.

I myself have had the opportunity to plant rice in wetlands. It is an amazing experience to see how day by day the interaction between water and plant matter is transformed into life and food. It is also important to highlight that wetlands are also crucial to the efforts to regulate the global climate. For example, peatlands, mangroves and seagrasses naturally store carbon. Peatlands cover only 3 per cent of the Earth’s surface but they store 30 per cent of all the Earth’s carbon. Mangroves, coral reefs and floodplains prevent disasters caused by floods during extreme climatic events, being important to nature-based solutions for adaptation and resilience.

Despite all the benefits that they provide, wetlands have been seriously threatened for several decades. Wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests. According to the *Global Wetland Outlook 2018*, 35 per cent of wetlands have been lost since 1970.

Recent assessments by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services concluded that 75 per cent of the Earth’s land surface has been significantly altered by human actions, including the loss of 85 per cent of wetland area, making them the ecosystems with the highest rate of deterioration, loss and degradation.

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Wetlands are essential to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. There is an overwhelming lack of awareness of the benefits and services they provide, so if this draft resolution is adopted, it could leverage the considerable global platform of the United Nations to strengthen efforts to promote the wise use of wetlands and raise the level of attention on this important issue.

We are confident that this international day will further encourage Governments to promote campaigns, actions and habits towards those goals. Furthermore, the support of other actors, like the media, the private sector and citizens, would help accelerate their conservation and wise use.

The final result that we present today for the consideration of the Assembly is a sign of the commitment of all delegations to this common cause. We commend the constructive and positive attitude of those who joined us in producing a robust document to highlight the crucial role of wetlands. We also thank those countries accompanying Costa Rica in co-sponsoring this draft resolution and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat for its guidance during this process.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1.

**Mr. Tiare** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): As we are about to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1, solemnly proclaiming 7 October each year as World Cotton Day, I would like to pay tribute to the hundreds of millions of people worldwide for whom the cultivation of cotton is a vital resource. Today is an important day for them and I would like to congratulate the member countries of the Cotton-4 — Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Chad and my own country, Burkina Faso — as well as all of the sponsors for having placed this issue on the agenda of the General Assembly.

We note that cotton, considered white gold in many countries, is a natural fibre that provides both cloth and food, thus contributing to improved food security and nutrition. Moreover, its cultivation continues to make enormous strides in sustainability and environmental responsibility and helps to reduce poverty by providing sustainable and decent jobs to millions of people worldwide.

According to statistics, cotton is grown in more than 100 countries on 2.5 per cent of the world's arable land — some 35 million hectares — making cotton one of the most widely grown crops in terms of land use. Cotton is also a highly traded agricultural product, with over 150 countries involved in its export or import. In addition, cotton biodegrades faster than synthetic alternatives, reducing the amount of plastics that enter our environment.

Despite all its benefits and obvious popularity, the role of cotton as a catalyst for sustainable development in least developed and developing countries suffers from a lack of visibility as we enter the decade of action of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That is why, through the adoption of this draft resolution, we wish to fill this legitimate need for visibility and recognition of the role of cotton in the sustainable development process.

Thus, the declaration of World Cotton Day will undoubtedly contribute to raising awareness in the international community of the important contribution of cotton to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. That is why, on 7 October each year, the international community and cotton stakeholders will celebrate World Cotton Day, raising awareness among the target public of the many advantages of cotton, from its qualities as a natural fibre to the many benefits derived from its production, processing, trade and consumption throughout the world. In view of the importance of this day, which enables us to elevate the livelihoods of the millions of people involved in the production of cotton and related industries, I call on all delegations to adoption this critical draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors and all of the countries that are members of the Cotton-4.

I would like to thank all the delegations that actively participated in the negotiation process for their commitment, their constructive spirit and their flexibility that made it possible to submit a consensual text for adoption. I am very grateful to all the delegations that have already sponsored the draft resolution and I invite those that have not yet done so to do so now.

**The President:** Before we proceed to take a decision on the draft resolutions, delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting on either or both of the draft resolutions are invited to do so now in one intervention, Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind

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

**Mr. Vigersky** (United States of America): The United States will join the consensus on draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1, and we thank Mali and Burkina Faso for their facilitation. We note that while cotton plays an important role in improving the livelihoods of millions of people, we continue to see labour rights abuses in the cotton sector, and we cannot overlook the exploitation of those workers. On paragraph 7, we urge the United Nations, civil society and the private sector to uphold the labour rights of all workers, including in cotton supply chains, and to stand firmly against the uses of child and forced labour across the industry. We further note that cotton, as a water-intensive crop, presents an important opportunity for improved water resource management.

With many agricultural regions facing water stress, the United States encourages the development of on-farm water management, efficient irrigation and other innovations to support a sustainable cotton sector. The United States reaffirms its explanation of position on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as delivered on 1 September 2015 (see A/69/PV.101).

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.125, entitled “World Wetlands Day”.

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.125, and in addition to the delegations listed in that document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, China, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.125?

*Draft resolution A/75/L.125 was adopted (resolution 75/317).*

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1, entitled “World Cotton Day”.

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.126/Rev.1, and in addition to the delegations listed in that document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, Gabon, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, the Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1?

*Draft resolution A/75/L.126/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 75/318).*

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

**Agenda item 73 (continued)****Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance****(a) Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations****Draft resolution (A/75/L.127)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.127.

**Mr. Liburd** (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I have the honour, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.127, entitled “Solidarity with and support for the Government and people of Haiti in the aftermath of the recent earthquake”, under sub-item (a) of agenda item 73.

Eleven years after Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake, our sister country was ravaged yet again by a 7.2-magnitude earthquake on 14 August. That was followed by Tropical Storm Grace on 16 August, which resulted in flooding and landslides.

The most recent report published by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency has recorded a death toll of at least 2,000 persons and more than 9,000 people injured. The latest count shows that 684,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance, while approximately 138,600 families have already registered in shelters in the most affected area of the country.

The draft resolution therefore expresses deep concern about the devastating effects of the earthquake and the subsequent tropical storm, as well as the urgent need to restore normal conditions for the population. The draft resolution also notes the need for scaling up access to and the administration of vaccines to address the ongoing public-health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

It further reiterates the need for a continued high level of support for and commitment to immediate humanitarian relief in the medium and long terms that reflects a spirit of international solidarity and cooperation in addressing those natural disasters.

As CARICOM States, we cannot overemphasize the environmental vulnerability that our small island developing States continue to face. The draft resolution

thus invites the international community to continue its efforts to increase support and encourages the international financial institutions and organizations to respond generously with immediate relief in Haiti. That also includes bilateral and multilateral donors. It requests the Secretary-General, to the extent of his authority, to continue to support rehabilitation efforts in Haiti.

An informal consultation was held on Tuesday, 24 August that solicited the views of all Member States on the draft. We thank delegations for their constructive engagement and look forward to their support for the text, as amended. We hope that those amendments are amenable to all delegations, given that our primary consideration in this process was to maintain, to the extent possible, agreed language.

Finally, CARICOM member States would like to thank all the delegations that co-sponsored this draft resolution and humbly ask those that have not yet done so at this time to do likewise and co-sponsor it.

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.127.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.127, entitled “Solidarity with and support for the Government and people of Haiti in the aftermath of the recent earthquake”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/75/L.127, and in addition to the delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of A/75/L.127: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia,

Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.127?

*Draft resolution A/75/L.127 was adopted (resolution 75/319).*

**The President:** I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make a statement after the adoption of resolution 75/319.

**Mr. Rodrigue (Haiti)** (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to warmly thank, on behalf of the people and the Government of Haiti, all delegations for their invaluable support for resolution 75/319, entitled “Solidarity with and support for the Government and people of Haiti in the aftermath of the recent earthquake”, which supports the Government and the people of Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake that just struck the country and which the General Assembly just adopted by an overwhelming majority. That is without a doubt a tangible sign of the attention and the solidarity of the international community towards the people of Haiti at this agonizing moment in its history.

Once again, my country, Haiti, has been battered by a major natural disaster, which has left a heavy toll in terms of loss of human life and property, injuries and destroyed or severely damaged infrastructure. The entire southern peninsula has been severely impacted. All communes, towns and villages sustained considerable damage. The commune of Azile, in Nippes department, was wiped off the map. Not a single home, not a single building is left.

We should point out to that less than 48 hours after the earthquake, tropical storm Grace struck the affected area, causing major flooding that increased the damage and the suffering of an already exhausted people. The latest figures reported by the national emergency operations centre indicate more than 2,200 confirmed deaths, 332 missing and 13,000 wounded. More than 136,800 families are affected, and approximately 700,000 people require emergency humanitarian assistance.

In terms of infrastructure, the damage is also considerable: 30,122 homes of various sizes were destroyed and 42,737 others damaged. The public buildings, churches and schools that traditionally served as temporary shelters were severely affected. Roads were cut off and bridges damaged, and landslides and mudslides have made it difficult to provide first aid to the affected areas. The earthquake of 14 August and the floods caused by tropical storm Grace also had a devastating impact on agriculture and livestock in an area that was considered the breadbasket of the country, inflicting serious economic damage and aggravating the existing acute food insecurity.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express here, on behalf of the people and the Government of Haiti, our most profound gratitude to the international community as a whole and in particular to our brotherly countries of the western hemisphere, namely, those of the Caribbean Community, as well as to international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the citizens of the world for the support and assistance that we received following that tragedy. The Haitian diaspora as a whole also deserves our praise and admiration for its rapid and effective mobilization in order to provide assistance to their compatriots. The speed of the response provided by the international community and the support that it continues to provide to those affected are truly signs of the international compassion and solidarity that prevail in disasters of that scope, of which the United Nations is the symbol.

The United Nations, through the Secretary-General, assured the people of Haiti of the solidarity of the Organization and promised to stand alongside Haiti and to support it at every step of the way as it emerges from the crisis. The involvement of the United Nations has taken the form of the two-day visit made to Haiti by the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, during which she visited the affected areas in order to

see for herself the extent of the damage and to ensure that the actions undertaken by the United Nations offices in Haiti meet the real needs of the victims. Her arrival in Haiti also provided great comfort to families in distress, and we are extremely grateful for that compassion.

The United Nations country team mobilized to provide assistance to the victims and help those in need. On the very day of the earthquake, local and international humanitarian partners, under the leadership of the Government, quickly set up a vast relief operation. Search and rescue teams and medical brigades were dispatched to hard-to-reach areas in order to try to find survivors, provide emergency medical care and deliver drinking water and food to the victims of the earthquake.

We would like to thank the Resident Coordinator, Mr. Bruno Lemarquis, and the country team for their commitment and their dedication. The United Nations and its partners launched an appeal for funds totalling of \$187.3 million in order to provide emergency aid to the more than 800,000 people affected by the earthquake, namely, shelter, water and sanitation, emergency medical care, food, protection and rapid recovery. We would like to express our gratitude for that initiative, which was crucial to tackling the major humanitarian challenge that our country is facing. We call upon the generosity of all our international partners and friendly countries to help the Government to meet the basic needs of the people affected.

Today Haiti faces a major challenge. Even before the earthquake, the socioeconomic situation of the country was troubling owing to the combined effects of pre-existing needs, the ongoing political crisis, socioeconomic challenges, growing insecurity and the impact of the pandemic. The earthquake and tropical storm Grace considerably worsened an already very complex humanitarian situation. Indeed, the Government is already thinking about reconstruction. The results of an initial satellite evaluation of the impact of the earthquake have shown that the damage would require the disbursement of \$1.12 billion. A recovery and development plan for the southern peninsula was launched with the objective of stressing the importance of linking emergency assistance and sustainable development, and the short term and the long term.

However, thanks to the resilience of the Haitian people and their courage and bravery, and with the help

of the international community, we are certain that we can recover from this calamity. As I said earlier, the Government is already thinking about reconstruction.

It is from that point of view that the resolution we just adopted becomes relevant. By asking the international community to step up its humanitarian assistance and efforts to help Haiti recover, the resolution is launching an urgent appeal to partners to give the country the support it needs to face its catastrophic situation. At this stage, we will need generous, sustained and consistent support to rebuild the country on a new basis and strengthen its prospects for sustainable development.

**Mr. Biang (Gabon):** At the outset, on behalf of the Group of African States, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Haiti on the devastating consequences that the recent earthquake caused the Haitian nation. The second in a decade, the earthquake hit Haiti at a time when the country was beginning to find new paths towards healing, following the death of President Jovenel Moïse and the political uncertainties that were beginning to fade with the formation of the new Government. The harrowing scenes of destruction, the loss of lives and the disappearance of livelihoods, amid the ongoing pandemic, have really stretched the physical and mental resilience of the Haitian people.

In solidarity with the Haitian people, the Group of African States fully supports resolution 75/319, put forward by the Caribbean Community. We endorse in particular the call to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the area of natural disasters from relief to development, for the sake of Haiti.

We urge all humanitarian agencies not to relent in their efforts and to continue to mobilize all the resources required to assist the country in its time of need. We encourage the international financial institutions to support the rebuilding of Haiti with flexible financial arrangements during this moment of vulnerability. In that regard, the African Group commends the Caribbean Community, the United Nations and all the State and non-State organizations that have assisted Haiti.

Finally, we urge all Member States to come together to show our love to the people of Haiti and give our full support to resolution 75/319 for the much-needed

humanitarian assistance to Haiti, its development and enduring prosperity.

**Mr. DeLaurentis** (United States of America): The United States stands with the people of Haiti at this difficult time, as they work to recover from a series of multidimensional crises. In the short span of three days, Haiti was hit by two natural disasters — a devastating 7.2-magnitude earthquake followed by a tropical depression. Those events have resulted in thousands of lost lives, tens of thousands of people injured, hundreds of thousands of lost homes and extensive damage to critical infrastructure. We offer our condolences to all those affected.

Displaced people desperately need emergency shelter, food, water, medicine and other core relief. The affected communities were already struggling to combat the coronavirus disease pandemic and overcome gang violence and insecurity. The 2021 humanitarian response plan for Haiti is currently only 16 per cent funded, leaving a shortfall of nearly \$200 million dollars, not including last week's flash appeal of \$187 million dollars. We must act together now to respond and bring urgent relief to the people of Haiti.

The United States is proud to co-sponsor resolution 75/319, which we just adopted. We are also proud to have stepped up to deliver emergency response aid over the past couple of weeks. At the direction of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Joint Task Force Haiti has conducted 364 missions, assisted or saved 436 people and delivered over a 163,000 pounds of relief supplies. USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team arrived in Haiti shortly after the earthquake hit and has assessed needs, determined priorities and delivered assistance by air, land and sea. Our team has reached over a dozen hard-hit communities in south-western Haiti, with further missions planned to provide additional aid to people as quickly as possible. USAID is working closely with United Nations partner organizations, including the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Organization for Migration, to jointly identify and meet critical humanitarian needs. On 26 August, during an official visit to Haiti, USAID

Administrator Samantha Power announced \$32 million additional dollars in funding to support ongoing relief. Those actions reflect our steadfast commitment to provide timely humanitarian relief to those in need. We urge other Member States to do the same.

Yet the cooperation and coordination needed to respond to humanitarian challenges cannot be simply a reactive effort. The United States reaffirms its long-standing commitment to working with global partners to enhance countries' resilience to the impacts of the climate crisis and their ability to better prepare for, and respond to, natural disasters. That includes sharing knowledge, data and tools to help countries predict, prepare for and adapt to change. In the immediate and medium terms, we remain committed to helping offer relief and support to the people of Haiti. We are urge other countries to join us in this effort.

**The President:** I join Member States and the global community in commiseration with the Government and the people of Haiti on the devastation and the loss of lives as a result of the recent earthquake and the added distraction of tropical storm Grace.

The looming impact of climate change and disaster is visible in most parts of the Caribbean, a situation I had the opportunity to observe first-hand during my recent visit. As Haiti was still in a recovery process from the earthquake of 2010, the earthquake of 14 August has further exacerbated the socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges in the country. I therefore join the collective call for global solidarity for immediate humanitarian relief and recovery action to assist the Government and the people of Haiti to build back better.

With reference to my appeal for vaccines for all, I would like to urge for the scaling-up of efforts to ensure that the wider Haitian population be vaccinated in order to avert a deeper catastrophe. As I have reiterated, it is a moral and practical imperative that we cover all people, with particular support for the poorest and the most vulnerable.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 73.

*The meeting rose at 11 a.m.*