



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 February 2010

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 34th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 November 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Mićić (Vice-Chairperson) (Serbia)

later: Mr. Park In-kook (Chairperson) (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (*continued*)

- (e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*)
- (g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session (*continued*)

Agenda item 54: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (*continued*)

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*)

Agenda item 50: Information and communication technologies for development (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

09-60406 (E)



Please recycle A recycling symbol consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.

In the absence of Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mićić (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (continued)
(A/C.2/64/L.24**)

Draft resolution on harmony with Mother Earth

1. **Mr. Solón-Romero** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), introducing the draft resolution, said that the expression “Mother Earth” used in it referred to the interdependence that existed between human beings, other species and the planet that all inhabited, and emphasized the relationship of human beings with the system. The Earth was a dynamic planet, with the continents, atmosphere, oceans and glaciers in constant change and constantly interacting in myriad ways. According to a study done by the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme entitled *Global Change and the Earth System*, the planet behaved as a single, integrated and self-regulating system composed of physical, chemical, biological and human components. The interactions and feedback between components were complex, with multiple temporal and spatial scales. Until recently, humans had been an insignificant force in the dynamics of the Earth system, but humankind had now begun to match and exceed nature in the effects it had on the biosphere. The magnitude, spatial scale and pace of human-induced change were unprecedented.

2. In July 2001, scientists from four international research programmes on global change, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change, the World Climate Research Programme and the international biodiversity programme DIVERSITAS, had adopted the Amsterdam Declaration of Global Change, which stated, “Human activities are significantly influencing Earth’s environment in many ways in addition to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Anthropogenic changes to Earth’s land surface, oceans, coasts and atmosphere and to biological diversity, the water cycle and biogeochemical cycles are ... equal to some of the great forces of nature in their extent and impact. Many are accelerating. Global change is real and is happening now.” It also said, “Global change cannot be understood in terms of a simple cause-effect paradigm.

Human-driven changes cause multiple effects that cascade through the Earth system in complex ways.”

3. Those changes led to dramatic coastal and marine habitat alteration, significant increases in rates of intoxication of terrestrial and marine species, increased nitrogen and methane concentration in the atmosphere, significant loss of the ozone layer, unusual increase in temperature, greater frequency of major floods and natural disasters and significant loss of tropical forests. The impact of human activities was so great that some scientists had proposed that a new geological era had begun, the Anthropocene Era. Analysis of the Earth as a system and its relationship to human activity was a major issue in the scientific and academic world and had been taken up by such organizations as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

4. The inclusion of the agenda item entitled Harmony with Mother Earth sought to promote reflection, debate and development of proposals at the intergovernmental level. While the progress of the environmental agenda of the United Nations at the level of biodiversity, the ozone layer, desertification, climate change and other sectors was laudable, it must be supplemented with a more holistic approach in which the sectoral and global aspects were mutually supportive.

5. The proposed resolution sought to develop a perspective of balance between human beings and nature. The concept of human supremacy over the environment was outdated, and the concept of harmony was in the interests of present and future human welfare as well as the welfare of nature. There could be no human development if humanity destroyed Mother Earth.

6. As part of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment conducted from 2001 to 2005, 1,360 experts from 95 countries had proposed that when studying the actions that influence ecosystems it was necessary to consider not only human welfare, but also the intrinsic values of species and ecosystems. The goal was not to have no effect on nature, since human life always involved some impact on the planet. However, such activity must not affect the balance of the Earth system in such a way as to run counter to human development. The resolution put humans and nature at the centre. The purpose was to deepen the concept of sustainable development from the perspective of both humanity and nature.

7. The concept of harmony with nature had been enshrined in various multilateral and regional declarations, including the World Charter for Nature, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Second Summit of the Americas Santiago Declaration, the Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Carpathian and Danube Region, the Constitutive Treaty of the Union of South American Nations, the fifteenth Summit Declaration of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Final Declaration of the seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Bolivarian Alternative for the People of Our Americans — Treaty of Commerce for the People.

8. Although, some of the 10 items on the agenda of the General Assembly dealt with the environment and sustainable development, none directly addressed the holistic and integrated relationship between humans and the Earth system as a whole. The inclusion of the item was thus urgent. Consideration of the issue would be based upon what States were already doing in the scientific, environmental, management and normative areas; initially, the approach would focus on non-binding general guidelines as a means of making progress in relation to a relatively new and complex issue. It was important to develop an ethical basis needed for the new Anthropocene Era.

9. *Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Chairperson, took the Chair.*

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (continued) (A/C.2/64/L.31)

Draft resolution on the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)

10. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.31 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session (continued) (A/C.2/64/L.30)

Draft resolution on the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session

11. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.30 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 54: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (continued) (A/C.2/64/L.32)

Draft resolution on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

12. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.32 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the fifth preambular paragraph would be amended to bring it into conformity with the previous year's resolution on the same subject (General Assembly resolution 63/221); he also proposed a drafting change in operative paragraph 3.

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (continued) (A/C.2/64/L.12)

Draft resolution on permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

13. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.12, which had no programme budget implications. A recorded vote had been requested.

14. **Ms. de Laurentis** (Secretary of the Committee) noted that the document symbol given in footnote 7 to draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.12 should be changed to read A/64/77-E/2009/13.

15. **Mr. Tag-Eldin** (Egypt) said that there were eight additional sponsors whose names were not reflected in the text. They were: Bolivia, Comoros, Cuba, Ecuador, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Senegal, South Africa and Venezuela. Three other countries wished to join the list of sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Namibia and Pakistan.

16. **Mr. Alahraf** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) asked who had requested the recorded vote.

17. **The Chairperson** said that two delegations had requested the recorded vote.

18. **Mr. Tag-Eldin** (Egypt) said that he believed that the representative of Libya wished to know which delegations had requested the recorded vote.

19. **The Chairperson** said that Israel and the United States of America had requested the recorded vote.

20. **Ms. Davidovich** (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that the world faced serious issues related to health, food security, climate change and women's empowerment, inter alia, and the Committee might therefore be expected to devote its time and resources to issues such as those. It was disappointing, therefore, to be considering a draft resolution which was the result of politicized objectives rather than professional conduct.

21. The resolution, presented *ad nauseam*, ignored the fruitful and intensive bilateral cooperation taking place between Israel and the Palestinians on a variety of issues, including the environment. It also ignored the numerous agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority that had already conferred jurisdiction with respect to the relevant issues on the Palestinians. It was not productive to adopt a resolution on the subject each year. Those wishing to address relevant concerns should do so in the context of the appropriate forum on the ground.

22. The action reflected a pattern which failed to address all sides in an equitable manner, but was rather part of an effort to institutionalize an anti-Israel narrative within the United Nations. While it had apparently succeeded, it had not served the interests of the Palestinian people, nor those of anyone seeking a peaceful resolution in the Middle East. For all of the reasons cited, Israel had called for a vote on the resolution and would vote against it.

23. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.12.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt,

El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Fiji, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Panama.

24. *Draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.12 was adopted by 152 votes to 9, with 3 abstentions.*

25. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) thanked those Member States which had voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted. Contrary to what the representative of Israel had said, it addressed an issue that was of critical importance to the Palestinian people, and of no less importance as the other issues before the Committee. The draft resolution came at a particularly hard time for the Palestinians, as they continued to suffer the dire consequences of the

42-year military occupation, which spared no effort to plunge them deeper into poverty and hopelessness.

26. By adopting the resolution, the international community had reaffirmed its commitment to international law and the rights it proclaimed. The adoption of the resolution also sent a clear message to the Palestinian people, whose rights and resources were being stolen and remained under seizure by the occupying Power, that the international community stood with them and their inalienable right to a life of dignity and prosperity, in which their natural resources were employed for their benefit and not for the benefit of the illegal settlers. It also demonstrated the international community's overwhelming support for holding all States to the same standards and responsibilities, clearly demonstrating that no member of the Organization was above international law and covenants.

27. A people's permanent sovereignty over its natural resources was part and parcel of its inalienable right to self-determination as established by international law, and must be safeguarded by the international community in the interests of peace and stability. The resolution just adopted provided such legal and moral protection, and was a step in the right direction, towards establishing justice, development and peace.

28. Claiming that such resolutions were irrelevant was yet another assault, similar to the one carried out by the Prime Minister of Israel in the General Assembly, against the will of the international community, which had repeatedly tried to uphold international law and the principles for which the United Nations stood.

Agenda item 50: Information and communication technologies for development (*continued*)
(A/C.2/64/L.11)

Draft resolution on building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway

29. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.11, which contained no programme budget implications.

30. **Mr. Jafarov** (Azerbaijan) said that Australia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Iraq, Israel, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia and Switzerland had joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution. India would also join as a sponsor.

31. The following editorial changes would be made to the draft resolution: "Super Highway" would be written as two words; in preambular paragraph 5, the word "Secretariat" would be changed to read "United Nations"; and in the same paragraph, "Baku" would be followed by a comma and the word "Azerbaijan," as in the version previously submitted by his delegation.

32. *Draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.11, as orally amended, was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.