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Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 October 2020, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Kelapile (Botswana)
later: Mr. Hussar (Vice-Chair) (Romania)

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Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*)*

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 50: Effects of atomic radiation
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Agenda item 61: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) ([A/75/23](#), [A/75/73](#), [A/75/220](#) and [A/75/367](#))

1. **Mr. Ruidíaz Pérez** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Spanish, said that multilingualism was a core value that fostered respect, equality, multiculturalism, inclusion, diversity and

international peace. Multilingualism enabled the United Nations to involve civil society in its work, something that was more important than ever in the current context of fake news and misinformation. The Organization had a responsibility to be a source of reliable, timely and science-based information that was accessible to a culturally and linguistically diverse global population. In that connection, the Group commended the Department of Global Communications for the “Verified” initiative, which was intended to combat misinformation about coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Department should make full use of the United Nations information centres, the diversity of its staff members and new technologies to disseminate truly multilingual content, created by and for people of different linguistic backgrounds. The Group had confidence in the ability of that Department, as well as the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, supported by the Coordinator for Multilingualism, to achieve parity among the six official languages and ensure the timely dissemination of multilingual content and documentation on United Nations websites and social media accounts and the e-deleGATE and eStatements portals.

2. The Organization must move from a culture of translation, in which English served as a basis for most content, to a truly multilingual culture, in which the particularities of each language were considered at every stage of the communication process. To that end, the United Nations should strive to ensure that staff accounting for all languages and regions, including Latin America, were represented in the areas of translation and interpretation, communications, news and media. Having a multilingual workforce would strengthen the reach, transparency and representativeness of the Organization.

3. The United Nations website was an important source of information for Spanish-speaking audiences. Spanish was the second most commonly used language in searches of the United Nations website, and during the period from February to May 2020, United Nations News in Spanish had been consulted more than any other language version. The United Nations must respond to the clear and growing interest of Spanish speakers in the work of the United Nations, including by continuing to invest in United Nations News in Spanish and by adapting to higher search volumes and greater interaction with Spanish-speaking audiences worldwide. The Group acknowledged the financial implications of fully implementing multilingualism and would therefore continue to call for the allocation of sufficient resources.

4. **Mr. Díaz Ortega** (Mexico) said that peacekeeping operations must have clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures and adequate, secure funding based on a realistic assessment of the situation on the ground. Early inclusion of peacebuilding in mandates, particularly during transitional and drawdown phases, would lay the groundwork for long-term, sustainable peace. The newly opened Mexican Joint Training Centre for Peacekeeping Operations would enable Mexico to build capacity at the national level and train personnel from other States. Mexico remained committed to the women and peace and security agenda and to increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

5. Mexico remained unreservedly committed to the right of peoples to self-determination and would therefore continue to promote any initiative that favoured the self-determination of peoples through peaceful means to resolve pending issues. The United Nations must continue its efforts to find solutions to decolonization processes, particularly in the context of the fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

6. The rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were legally and historically valid. It was essential that a just, peaceful, definitive and mutually acceptable solution to the dispute be found, in keeping with the relevant resolutions and declarations adopted by the United Nations and the Organization of American States. The Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations as soon as possible.

7. His delegation supported efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara that would lead to the self-determination of the Sahrawi people, as called for in the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. His delegation recognized the work of the Secretary-General in that regard and called for the timely appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to allow ongoing work towards a solution acceptable to all parties. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was highly important as a guarantor of stability and the ceasefire.

8. His delegation supported the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to provide humanitarian assistance. With seven decades of experience, UNRWA had an unparalleled insight into the needs of refugees and the socioeconomic and political

conditions on the ground. The continued instability in the Middle East had had a severe impact on the economic, social and humanitarian situation of civilians, in particular women and children. Accordingly, Mexico remained committed to a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist and the establishment of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State within secure, internationally recognized borders, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions. All Member States must be part of the solution to the conflict and must not allow political considerations to hinder progress.

9. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that Paraguay, as a troop-contributing country, attached great importance to the effective implementation of the mandates of peacekeeping operations. Troop-contributing countries should continue to enact reforms aimed at mitigating threats to peacekeeping operations, including by improving risk assessment, better identifying threats, clearly establishing professional requirements, strengthening predeployment training and ensuring that troops were better equipped. To that end, Paraguay had established a dedicated training centre, where its troops and police received predeployment training in such areas as ethical conduct and the protection of civilians. The protection of civilians should be clearly and explicitly mentioned as a priority in every mandate. His delegation supported efforts to implement the agenda on women and peace and security and remained committed to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

10. Multilingualism was of fundamental importance to the United Nations and allowed for a true multilateral dialogue and greater efficiency and transparency within the Organization. Spanish was the second most widely spoken language worldwide and the second most commonly used language in searches of the United Nations website. His delegation recognized the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to provide high-quality content and services in the six official languages, but remained concerned at the disparity between the use of English and the other five. The different language versions of the Organization's website and social media accounts must have the same quantity and quality of information and must be kept up to date. His delegation welcomed efforts to strengthen the United Nations information centres, which played a key role through their use of local languages and their adaptation of messages from the global level to the local context. His delegation remained concerned at the continuing linguistic disparity in daily press releases, in which English and French continued to be prioritized

over the other official languages. Press releases, as well as webcasts of meetings, should be made available in all official languages.

11. The principle of the self-determination of peoples, as a pillar of the modern system of international relations, provided the basis for peaceful and friendly ties among States. Paraguay acknowledged the efforts of the Committee to ensure the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization and other relevant resolutions, which had allowed a number of countries to join the United Nations. The international community must continue in its efforts to allow the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty. General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) were the most useful and transparent instruments for achieving those objectives.

12. His delegation reiterated its support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. His delegation commended the willingness of the Government of Argentina to explore all avenues towards a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute.

13. On the question of Western Sahara, Paraguay supported the political process under way under the auspices of the Secretary-General, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2494 (2019), in which the Council emphasized the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution based on compromise.

14. **Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand) said that space technology could contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and advances in global health; for instance, Earth observation data should be used to study the environmental, economic and societal impacts of COVID-19. His Government was currently drafting a national space act, which would allow authorized agencies to pursue the country's space aspirations while ensuring that all space-related activities were conducted in a systematic, coherent and responsible manner. Technology transfer, knowledge-sharing, joint research and cooperation on space-related matters must remain a priority.

15. Phase two of the Thai Earth Observation System, due to launch in 2021, would significantly enhance the country's security, resource management, disaster management and urban and economic development.

Thailand remained committed to providing data from its existing Earth observation satellite to the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development established by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and to the Sentinel Asia Initiative in order to assist in disaster responses across the region. Thailand also worked closely with the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to provide maps for disaster management worldwide.

16. Peacekeepers contributed to long-term development by building capacities, providing logistical support, raising awareness and supporting the local health-care infrastructure. In South Sudan, Thai peacekeepers had helped to construct a COVID-19 screening facility in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) compound and had established a learning centre to share best practices on agriculture, resource management and health care with the local community. Peacekeepers must be equipped with the capabilities, knowledge, skills and attitude required to perform their duties. Thailand was therefore committed to being a regional centre of excellence on the issue of children and armed conflict and stood ready to support the United Nations and other partners in providing capacity-building and training for peacekeepers. Because women played an important role in peacebuilding and sustainable conflict resolution, all relevant stakeholders should eliminate barriers to the recruitment, promotion and deployment of qualified women peacekeepers and implement zero-tolerance policies on sexual exploitation and abuse. The ongoing 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was an opportunity to explore ways to further strengthen peacebuilding.

17. Thailand remained committed to improving the lives of Palestine refugees and had consistently made financial contributions to UNRWA since 1978. In addition to a multi-year pledge totalling \$200,000 covering the period 2017–2021, Thailand had pledged an additional \$30,000 at the extraordinary pledging conference held in June 2020. His delegation supported efforts to find a mutually agreed and peaceful solution to the conflict, based on a two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and international law, in order to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East.

18. While it was important to disseminate information in a timely manner, it was equally important to ensure that the information was fact-based, accurate and of the highest quality, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic. Close coordination, adequate oversight and appropriate training would help to prevent

the spread of misinformation. Multilingualism could promote unity and international understanding, bridge differences between cultures and religions, ensure inclusion and improve the effectiveness of the United Nations. The Department of Global Communications should continue to promote multilingualism in all its work, including by disseminating information in local languages. The pandemic had highlighted the widening digital divide among States. The United Nations should therefore continue to use both traditional and digital media to raise awareness of its work and priorities, in order to reach populations in developing countries where print, television and radio remained the main means of communication.

19. **Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that all States had the right to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a party to four major conventions on outer space activities, including the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. His country's space activities were aimed at solving scientific and technological issues with a view to improving the national economy and people's lives. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was one of the world's top space powers, having independently manufactured and launched four satellites. While his country would continue to be independent and self-reliant with regard to the use of outer space, it was interested in international cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual benefits and reciprocity. It supported the "Space2030" agenda opposed selectivity and double standards in relation to space activities, rejected attempts to militarize outer space, and was committed to ensuring the transparency of its own space activities.

20. His delegation condemned the atrocities committed by Israel in the occupied territories and supported the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The Security Council must take strong measures in response to the human rights violations committed by Israel and its efforts to expand its territory. His delegation supported the Palestinian people in its struggle to end the illegal Israeli occupation and establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. It also supported the Syrian people in its struggle to reclaim the occupied Golan.

21. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that her delegation welcomed the "Space2030" agenda and the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to address the particular needs of developing countries.

Bangladesh had launched its first communications satellite and had recently applied for membership of that Committee with a view to increasing its capacity in relation to space technology.

22. Her delegation commended the work of UNRWA in providing emergency food and medicine, distance learning and telemedicine services to Palestine refugees during the pandemic. The Agency's perennial funding problems, exacerbated by the pandemic, created an environment of unpredictability, uncertainty and despair. The international community must provide UNRWA with generous and predictable funding and technical assistance.

23. Her delegation was deeply troubled by reports of Israeli practices that breached international law and Security Council resolutions, violated the human rights of Palestinians and had a disproportionate impact on Palestinian women and girls. The dismal state of the basic services available in Gaza was of serious concern, particularly in the context of the pandemic. There had been an increase in the demolition of Palestinian structures, settlement expansion and settler violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and such actions continued to be carried out with impunity. Her delegation endorsed the recommendations made in the report of the Special Committee (A/75/199) and reiterated its unwavering support for the inalienable right of the people of Palestine to self-determination, based on the two-State solution and the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

24. Notwithstanding the tragic deaths of 16 peacekeepers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the preventive measures taken by the United Nations were minimizing the impact of the virus on peacekeepers, who were at additional risk of infection owing to their role. In future, preparedness measures should be included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations in order to enable them to respond to health emergencies, and investments must be made in addressing existing and new challenges, particularly with regard to the safety and security of peacekeepers. In addition, efforts should be made to increase the number of women serving in peacekeeping operations, including in senior positions, as the participation of women helped to ensure a smooth transition to peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

25. Special political missions had a unique role to play in supporting the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire in the light of the pandemic. Bangladesh had been one of the first countries to support his appeal and had helped to mobilize support for it. Unfortunately, Myanmar continued to respond selectively to the appeal.

The ongoing conflict in Rakhine State was causing renewed fears of large-scale forced displacement into Bangladesh. Her delegation reiterated its support for the mandate of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, who should make sustained efforts to address the root causes of the persecution of the Rohingya and facilitate their sustainable return to Myanmar.

26. The response of the Department of Global Communications to the pandemic, in particular with regard to combating misinformation, had been extremely effective. The Department should use its influence to promote international cooperation in support of a sustainable recovery, and to implement innovative strategies aimed at connecting the United Nations with the people it served.

27. As the third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism drew to a close, the international community should step up its efforts to fulfil the Organization's decolonization commitments, including those set forth in General Assembly resolution [65/119](#). The Special Committee on decolonization had an important part to play in that process. In order to realize the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, students in Non-Self-Governing Territories should be provided with educational and training assistance.

28. **Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) said that the persistence of colonialism in the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories hampered the cultural, economic and social development of their populations and undermined the Organization's ideal of universal peace. It was therefore essential to promote dialogue and cooperation between the administering Powers and the Territories under their control with a view to implementing international commitments relating to decolonization. Member States administering Territories must demonstrate political will, and efforts to move independence processes forward must be redoubled, taking into account territorial integrity and self-determination, approaching each Territory on a case-by-case basis.

29. Ecuador reaffirmed its support for the mandate and work of UNRWA. Tangible progress should be made towards reaching a peaceful, definitive and just political solution for the parties, based on the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, within the recognized borders of 1967, and all United Nations bodies should work to mobilize international support and assistance for the Palestinian people.

30. The only way to resolve the question of the Malvinas Islands was for the Governments of Argentina

and the United Kingdom to resume bilateral negotiations, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions. It was worth noting that the Government of Argentina was willing to put in place arrangements for the resumption of dialogue aimed at reaching a definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute.

31. In view of the sacrifices made by peacekeeping personnel around the world, it was more important than ever to ensure that peacekeeping operations had the necessary political support and human, financial and logistical resources to implement their mandates effectively.

32. Efforts to develop international space law should continue with a view to preventing the militarization of outer space and preserving it for peaceful purposes. Universal access to space technology must be expanded in the service of sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation.

33. Multilingualism was an enabler of tolerance, international dialogue and unity within diversity. Spanish was the second most widely spoken language worldwide, and his delegation trusted that the Department of Global Communications would take into consideration the statistics on the number of Spanish-speaking users of United Nations online resources, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information ([A/75/294](#)), when disseminating information and designing campaigns and strategies.

34. **Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein) said that it was regrettable that it had not been possible to find a way to allow petitioners and representatives to speak at the current session on behalf of the 1.7 million people living in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In their absence, it was more incumbent than ever on Member States to consider how best to assist them in realizing their right to self-determination, whether that through the establishment of a sovereign and independent State, free association or integration with an independent State, or transition to any other political status freely determined by a people. Self-determination was a prerequisite for peoples to freely determine their political status, fully enjoy their human rights and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

35. As the third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism drew to a close, the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were inevitably those whose situations were the most difficult to address. In that context, the international community must be guided by the free and informed decision-

making of the peoples concerned. In some cases, free and informed consultations with those peoples might include a decision over whether they should remain on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. His delegation welcomed the holding of referendums on independence and the engagement of Non-Self-Governing Territories with regional intergovernmental organizations. In no event should populations formally remain colonial possessions as a result of broader geopolitical or strategic military prerogatives. In other cases, the States concerned should work with the United Nations in good faith to realize existing promises of self-determination. For instance, it was not acceptable, particularly for the sake of the Sahrawi people, that the role of Personal Envoy for Western Sahara remained unfilled. His delegation appreciated the sensitivities surrounding such topics and was ready to work with any State seeking sustainable conflict resolution, an end to colonialism and the realization of self-determination.

36. His delegation upheld the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The annexation of territory, or any decision to change or amend the border between Israel and Palestine without the explicit consent of both parties, was a violation of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, as was the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory. Progress must be made towards a two-State solution based on international law and the right to self-determination, which was the only viable path to sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

37. In coordination with national stakeholders and other United Nations actors on the ground, special political missions played an important role in sustainable conflict prevention and resolution. It was important to improve the gender balance and increase geographical representation within such missions and to engage with young people in the peacebuilding process. Special political missions could also make an important contribution to strengthening institutions and the rule of law. More consistent and effective mandates to that end would send a signal that all United Nations actors were fully committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

38. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that her delegation was grateful to the international community for its support for UNRWA, which provided essential services and emergency aid to millions of Palestine refugees who had been denied the right of return, which had been asserted in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and numerous other resolutions, and whose sense of hopelessness could have dire consequences if left unaddressed. UNRWA thus contributed to regional stability against a backdrop of

pervasive regional turmoil and the ongoing pandemic. Even before the pandemic, UNRWA had shown an exemplary ability to deliver humanitarian aid while also focusing on human development. It had done so despite chronic financial and operational crises, including the illegal blockade of Gaza by Israel, the entrenchment of the illegal Israeli occupation, the frenzied annexation drive across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the conflict in Syria, the fragile situation in Lebanon and growing economic distress in Jordan. The State of Palestine was grateful to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria for hosting Palestine refugees and facilitating the Agency's work, to the Advisory Commission and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA for their guidance, and to the Secretary-General for his strong support for the Agency.

39. In the light of the recurring financial deficits facing UNRWA, her delegation urged Member States to fulfil their pledges, reverse decisions to suspend funding to the Agency and increase their multi-year financial commitments where possible. Moreover, serious consideration should be given to providing additional funding for UNRWA from the United Nations regular budget to help cover the Agency's operational needs. Stabilizing the Agency's finances would help to allay the anxieties of refugees and host countries and improve regional stability.

40. Her delegation rejected the politicization of the humanitarian mandate of UNRWA, whose sole mission was to alleviate the suffering of Palestine refugees pending a just solution to their plight. Attacks on UNRWA were intended to negate the status and rights of Palestine refugees; but those rights would not be diminished by the passage of time or by cynical rhetoric and manoeuvres. The international community must reject such malicious rhetoric and stand firm in its support for UNRWA, which remained indispensable. The international community should act responsibly to achieve a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict and, until then, to maintain its solidarity with the Palestinian people, including Palestine refugees, and the Palestinian leadership.

41. Her delegation also rejected the aspersions cast on the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, whose report (A/75/199) merely reflected the facts of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and corroborated reports by international, Palestinian and Israeli rights groups, United Nations agencies and scholars reaffirming the systematic and discriminatory nature and massive scale of Israeli violations. Denying entry to mandate holders

and ridiculing the credibility of the Special Committee would not hide those crimes.

42. The illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as settlement colonization, the annexation of Palestinian land and the oppression of Palestinian people, must end. The Palestinian people must realize their inalienable, *erga omnes* right to self-determination and independence. No people would ever accept to live under perpetual occupation or willingly forsake their rights and freedoms. Accountability was imperative in order to deter future violations and salvage the prospects for a just peace. Achieving it would require collective action, in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The international community must stop appeasing Israel even as it flagrantly trampled the law. The repeated calls to end the Israeli occupation must be backed by action on the part of all States with a view to reaching a just solution based on the long-standing parameters enshrined in international law, the relevant resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

43. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa) said that any form or manifestation of colonialism, including economic exploitation, was inconsistent with the Declaration on decolonization and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. South Africa urged the international community to commit to the total elimination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations and called on the United Nations to contribute in a much more effective manner towards that end.

44. South Africa reaffirmed its support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. His delegation commended UNRWA and its staff, who carried out their work under extremely difficult circumstances.

45. The Sahrawi people was still unable to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination, which was guaranteed under the Charter of the United Nations. His delegation's support for that cause was based on the principles of decolonization, the promotion of human rights, international legality and the stability and security of the African continent. Some 30 years since its establishment, MINURSO had yet to fulfil its mandate. The United Nations should facilitate the holding of a referendum and fully assume its responsibility for protecting the human rights of the people of Western Sahara. The Security Council should ensure that MINURSO maintained its impartiality and

independence. The Secretary-General should expedite the appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara with a view to facilitating the resumption of direct negotiations between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), as called for by the Council, and ensuring that the momentum created by the round-table talks convened by the previous Personal Envoy in December 2018 and March 2019 was not squandered.

46. The decolonization of Mauritius should be undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution [73/295](#), in which the Assembly affirmed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the question of the Chagos Islands. The resolution was a strong signal from the international community that the Islands belonged to the people in whose land and continent they were located.

47. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative had increasingly become the guiding framework for the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and all peacekeeping operations. While the 2020 session of the Special Committee had been extremely productive, the Committee's restructured report should include a dedicated section on Africa, given the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union on matters of peace and security, including peacekeeping.

48. Peacekeepers, who already worked in difficult environments, had recently had to adapt to the additional challenges posed by COVID-19. His delegation therefore welcomed the adoption of resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#), in which the Security Council emphasized the importance of enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers. It also welcomed the phased roll-out of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System and the progress made in developing a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework, both of which would contribute to improving the performance of peacekeeping operations. The adoption of Security Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#), addressing the underrepresentation of women in peacekeeping operations, was another welcome development. The Security Council and the Special Committee on decolonization had different but complementary roles, and it was important to harmonize their decisions on peacekeeping policy issues.

49. Regrettably, some actors were using the pandemic to spread misinformation. His delegation commended the efforts of the World Health Organization to manage

the infodemic by disseminating timely, accurate and science-based information on COVID-19.

50. **Mr. Rai** (Papua New Guinea) said that many of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories had been under the yoke of colonialism for over 75 years; addressing that situation would take enhanced cooperation and dialogue among all parties concerned. In the light of the ongoing pandemic, the international community must work closely with the administering Powers of the Territories to ensure that their health and development needs were being met.

51. His delegation welcomed the holding of a referendum on the self-determination of New Caledonia on 4 October 2020, the second such referendum to be held under the terms of the Nouméa Accord, and congratulated the people of New Caledonia and the administering Power on the manner in which the referendum had been conducted. The people of New Caledonia had voted to retain the status quo by a slim majority of 6.6 per cent, but support was rising for a change to the status quo, with 46.7 per cent having voted in favour of independence, up from 43.2 per cent in the previous referendum, held in November 2018. Ultimately, the self-determination decision rested solely with the people of New Caledonia; what mattered was to ensure respect for their inherent human rights, dignity and self-determination process, and for those of colonized peoples everywhere. The Melanesian Spearhead Group, of which Papua New Guinea was a member, was committed to supporting the people of New Caledonia to chart their own path forward.

52. His delegation fully supported the process conducted under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his former Personal Envoy to bring about a mutually acceptable, negotiated and durable political solution to the dispute on Western Sahara and encouraged the next Personal Envoy, once appointed, to build on that momentum. Papua New Guinea welcomed the holding of two round tables with the participation of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and “Polisario” and was pleased that the parties had agreed to reconvene for a third round table. In seeking to resolve the outstanding issues, the actors should draw inspiration from Security Council resolutions 2414 (2018), 2440 (2018) and 2494 (2019).

53. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was worthy of support as it promoted a realistic, durable solution based on compromise. His delegation commended the efforts of Morocco to promote sustainable development, political participation and human rights and to combat COVID-19 in Western Sahara. The Laayoune Declaration, adopted on 26 February 2020 at the third Morocco-Pacific Island States Forum, reaffirmed the

principles of sovereign equality, political independence and the territorial integrity of States and, in that spirit, affirmed that the Western Sahara region was an integral part of Morocco.

54. *Mr. Hussar (Romania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

55. **Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) said that all Member States must respect the mandate of the Special Committee to examine the application of the Declaration. His delegation supported the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands. It recalled the region’s abiding interest in the resumption of negotiations by the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom in order to find, as soon as possible, a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and declarations of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

56. In its resolution 1514 (XV), the General Assembly had declared that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The principle of self-determination must not be used as a pretext for violating the territorial integrity of States. The United Nations had previously recognized the sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom as a “special and particular” colonial situation, because of its distinctive characteristics. The case involved a colonized territory, not a colonized people, because the current population of the Malvinas Islands had been transplanted by the United Kingdom at the time of its seizure of the Islands. Unilateral acts in the disputed area, related to the exploration and exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, were incompatible with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

57. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, his delegation supported the efforts of the Government of Morocco to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the regional dispute and believed that the Moroccan autonomy initiative constituted a realistic, credible and serious basis for reaching a negotiated solution between the parties, while respecting the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Morocco. Guatemala had supported all General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question of Western Sahara and the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoys to fulfil the mandates of those resolutions. The parties should continue to show political will and work together to establish a climate conducive to dialogue, in order to

enter into a substantive phase of negotiations with a view to ensuring the stability and security of the Maghreb region. Guatemala trusted that a new Personal Envoy would be appointed swiftly.

58. Guatemala, as a troop-contributing country, supported the development of a transparent and effective peacekeeping system. Peacekeeping operations should form part of a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and building sustainable peace that promoted sustainable development and addressed the root causes of conflict. Mindful of the importance of the women and peace and security agenda, his Government would continue to promote the full and equal participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

59. Guatemala welcomed the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework for peacekeeping operations, which was intended to improve performance and accountability. Performance was a shared responsibility. The mandates of peacekeeping operations must be well defined, realistic and achievable, backed up by adequate resources, clear policy planning and ongoing training. Host countries also had an important role to play by facilitating access and ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers. Status-of-forces agreements must be respected and all personnel, including special forces, must be fully equipped.

60. Special political missions were an essential mechanism for safeguarding peace and security and preventing conflict. His delegation was pleased that the pandemic had prompted the Department of Political Affairs and Peacebuilding, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support to develop a joint coordination mechanism aimed at enabling the Organization to respond in a more timely and effective manner to challenges.

61. His delegation remained committed to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. The principle of equitable geographical distribution must be applied to the appointment of the members of the bureaux of all Main Committees. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the decision adopted by the Fourth Committee at its first meeting, on 8 October (A/C.4/75/SR.1).

62. **Ms. Ali** (Maldives) said that, by providing humanitarian assistance and essential services, UNRWA played a crucial role in protecting Palestine refugees, supporting their human development and enabling them to lead dignified lives as they awaited a just and lasting solution and a return to their rightful land. The Agency's mandate was all the more critical in the context of the

ongoing pandemic. Her delegation was pleased that measures had been taken to address the allegations of misconduct at UNRWA and that the Agency was implementing management initiatives aimed at ensuring the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

63. To date, no real action had been taken to guarantee the rights of Palestinians. The global community had a responsibility to ensure that resolutions were upheld and to address the obstacles to their implementation. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the serious human rights violations detailed in the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/75/336), including home demolitions, family separations, arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, torture and excessive use of force against non-violent demonstrators. The blockade of Gaza restricted the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian supplies, limited the supply of electricity and water, and reduced access to medical care and educational and economic opportunities. In the West Bank, the pandemic had exacerbated the plight of the Palestinian people and risked increasing its dependency on humanitarian assistance.

64. As Member States resolved to build back better following the pandemic, the international community must redouble its efforts to reach a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, so that the people of Israel and Palestine could live peacefully side by side. To that end, her delegation supported the quest of Palestine to achieve international political recognition and obtain full membership of the United Nations.

65. **Mr. Jardali** (Lebanon) said that his delegation supported the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, had endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, was committed to ensuring the implementation of Security Council resolution 2538 (2020), and commended the Organization's efforts to protect peacekeepers, which had led to a decline in fatalities.

66. Since 1978, Lebanon had hosted the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which made a vital contribution to national stability and to peace and security in southern Lebanon. The explosion in Beirut on 4 August 2020 had damaged a Maritime Task Force vessel belonging to Bangladesh, resulting in the hospitalization of 23 Bangladeshi peacekeepers. The mission's effective crisis response plan had enabled it to

evacuate the vessel quickly. His delegation commended the courage of the crew and UNIFIL personnel.

67. In accordance with Security Council resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#) extending the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2021 and authorizing the mission to take temporary and special measures to provide support to Lebanon in the aftermath of the explosion, UNIFIL had deployed a multinational force to Beirut in September 2020 to assist the Lebanese authorities in clearing debris and carrying out construction work. Lebanon was grateful to UNIFIL staff and to troop-contributing countries for their support. The extension of the mandate of UNIFIL showed that the Security Council was committed to supporting the mission and preserving its capacity to maintain peace and security along the Blue Line. Lebanon reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

68. Despite the impact of COVID-19, UNRWA had continued to deliver services uninterrupted without putting its employees or refugees at risk. The Agency's work was more important than ever given the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and instability in the region, with refugees ever more reliant on UNRWA for basic services. Member States had a responsibility to provide UNRWA with the predictable funding it needed to continue providing services, by making regular, multi-year financial commitments. A total of \$130 million had been pledged at the pledging conference in June 2020, but the main challenge remained securing long-term, sustainable funding for the Agency, which served over 5 million Palestinian refugees.

69. In Gaza, Palestinians were experiencing a stringent blockade and unliveable conditions, while in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, they faced hardships and restrictions on their freedom of movement. The reports of the Secretary-General also described settlement expansion, increased settler violence and home demolitions, and cases of excessive use of force by Israeli Security Forces. Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank and the Jordan Valley had been overwhelmingly condemned by the international community. Israel must be held to account for such policies and practices, which clearly breached international law and its obligations as an occupying Power. The international community must press Israel to stop committing violations, end the occupation and respect the relevant Security Council resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), by putting an end to the decades-long injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people.

70. **Mr. Tejan** (Sierra Leone) said that Member States should continue to work together to contain COVID-19 and provide support to special political missions. Sierra Leone commended the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, which resonated with the African Union's initiative to silence the guns in Africa. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

71. It was important to integrate gender and youth perspectives into the operations of special political missions. Such missions were an indispensable mechanism for advancing conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives. Working with civil society, national institutions and subregional and regional organizations, special political missions provided critical support to Member States in defusing crises, facilitating dialogue and advancing long-term efforts to ensure sustainable peace. His delegation commended the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and hoped that the subregional and regional peace architecture would be given adequate support in order to enable the restoration of constitutional authority in Mali within a reasonable time frame.

72. Member States had a responsibility to translate their professed support for General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#) into concrete action in support of the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The achievement of a just, lasting, realistic and mutually acceptable political solution to the dispute over Western Sahara was long overdue. His delegation was gravely concerned about the restrictions described in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara ([S/2020/938](#)), fully supported Security Council resolution [2494 \(2019\)](#), looked forward to the appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, and believed that negotiations must resume as a matter of urgency. It welcomed the result of the referendum on the self-determination of New Caledonia, in which the people had expressed their desire to remain part of France. With regard to French Polynesia, where elections planned for March 2020 had been postponed as a result of the pandemic, his delegation called on the administering Power to accelerate efforts in favour of a fair and effective self-determination process, including a road map for self-determination.

73. It was important to be mindful of the long-term impact of economic and other activities undertaken by administering Powers that affected the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In order to achieve meaningful progress towards fair and effective

self-determination, measures must be implemented to safeguard the right of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to establish and maintain control over their natural resources. His delegation encouraged administering Powers to strengthen and diversify the economies of territories under their control in the interest of the peoples of those territories, in particular indigenous populations, and to provide compensation to populations in Non-Self-Governing Territories severely affected by military activities.

74. With regard to the question of Palestine, his delegation supported the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. The two-State solution was the only viable path to peace in the Middle East and his delegation encouraged Israel and Palestine to return to the established international mechanisms in order to achieve a negotiated settlement. Sierra Leone was gravely concerned that UNRWA lacked the resources it needed to support millions of refugees living in dire conditions and urged the General Assembly to consider ways of providing the Agency with adequate, sustainable and predictable funding.

75. **Mr. Allen** (United Kingdom) said that his Government's relationship with its Overseas Territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British. Where the people of a Territory chose to remain British, his Government would maintain and deepen the special relationship. The United Kingdom and its Territories recognized that their relationship brought mutual benefits and responsibilities. His Government's responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the Territories and their peoples. Territory Governments were expected to meet the same high standards as the Government of the United Kingdom in maintaining the rule of law, respect for human rights and integrity in public life, delivering efficient public services and building strong and successful communities. While the United Kingdom would carry out all the responsibilities of the sovereign Power, the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Territories were in agreement that the Territories were internally self-governing, subject only to the United Kingdom retaining powers to enable it to carry out its obligations under international law. The United Kingdom-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council met annually to monitor and drive forward collective priorities.

76. In the area of democratic development, his delegation welcomed the elections held in Anguilla and in Bermuda. The Government of the United Kingdom

was committed to involving all Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, in the negotiations on its future relationship with the European Union, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account at every stage of the process. His Government had established a dedicated Joint Ministerial Council on negotiations between Gibraltar and the European Union, an area in which Gibraltar had a particularly strong interest. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its long-standing commitment to the people of Gibraltar. It would neither enter into arrangements under which the Territory's people would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes nor participate in a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar was not content.

77. The United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas of both Territories, nor about the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, as that principle was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1 of the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. His Government continued to hope for a stronger, more productive relationship with Argentina, including in relation to the Falkland Islands, something that would be in the interests of all. At the same time, the United Kingdom remained firmly committed to the right of the Falkland Islanders to determine their own future; consequently, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders so wished. The 2013 referendum, in which 99.8 per cent of voters had voted to maintain the current status of the Falkland Islands as an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, had sent a clear message that the people of the Islands did not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Those wishes should be respected.

78. His Government also had no doubt about its sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory, which had been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. The United Kingdom stood by its long-standing commitment to cede sovereignty of the Territory to Mauritius when it was no longer required for defence purposes. The Territory hosted a defence facility run jointly by the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Owing to its strategic location in a region facing growing threats from State and non-State actors, the facility made a significant contribution to regional and global security. Through a support package worth some \$50 million, his Government was improving the lives of Chagossians

where they now lived, in Mauritius, Seychelles and the United Kingdom. His Government was also committed to preserving the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the Territory.

79. The United Kingdom continued to play a leading role in the area of the peaceful uses of outer space. It was important to discuss challenges related to outer space in a holistic manner, across the United Nations system, given that rapidly evolving risks to safety, sustainability and security in space did not always respect organizational structures.

80. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/75/199) underscored an emerging international consensus opposing those practices, and indeed all violations of international law. The Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians in times of war applied to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Israel must comply with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including those calling for an end to the embargo on the Gaza Strip, which had led to a deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation.

81. Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were illegal and an obstacle to peace, economic and social development and the two-State solution. The decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Arab Syrian Golan was null, void and without international legal effect. Her delegation rejected the illegal practices carried out in the Golan, which violated the relevant international resolutions.

82. A lasting, just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question would require serious negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides on the basis of agreed terms of reference, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, with the aim of establishing a viable Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital; the end the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territories; the immediate and complete cessation of settlement activities; the return of refugees; and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The status quo of Jerusalem and its Christian and Islamic holy sites, particularly the Aqsa Mosque, must be preserved.

83. Her Government would continue to provide the Palestinian people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory with humanitarian and development

assistance; its contributions had thus far exceeded \$1 billion. The support had helped to address urgent and long-term needs, strengthen infrastructure and provide work opportunities. Another \$150 million had been donated in 2020 to address humanitarian needs, including stopping the spread of the coronavirus.

84. Qatar had increased its contribution to the core budget of UNRWA and urged the international community to follow suit and thereby enable the Agency to address its financial difficulties. Her delegation commended UNRWA staff in the field for their hard work under difficult circumstances.

85. Ending colonialism and foreign occupation was one of the Organization's most important aims. Qatar encouraged the just settlement of territorial disputes in accordance with international law, considering each situation on a case-by-case basis. On the question of Moroccan Sahara, dialogue and negotiation had an important part to play in achieving a lasting solution. Qatar supported all efforts to reach a political settlement under the auspices of the Secretary-General, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and in a manner that preserved the sovereignty of the Moroccan State. In that connection, Qatar supported the autonomy initiative proposed by Morocco as a basis for settling the dispute.

86. **Mr. Rugeles** (Colombia) said that his country fully supported the rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute concerning the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and recognized that the issue was a special and particular colonial situation. The only way to end the dispute was through a peaceful settlement negotiated by the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom. His delegation called for dialogue and cooperation between the two parties with a view to finding a solution in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

87. Colombia supported a peaceful, definitive and comprehensive settlement to the question of Palestine through the two-State solution, on the basis of the 1967 borders and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent, viable and internationally recognized State, and the right of the State of Israel to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

88. Outer space must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, in strict compliance with international law. It was important to adopt guidelines for best practices, transparency and confidence-building measures and

norms of safe and responsible behaviour in outer space. His delegation called for the adoption of measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, encouraged Member States to ratify the relevant international instruments, and supported the “Space2030” agenda.

89. Special political missions were an important instrument for preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, and supporting political transitions. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to peacebuilding and acknowledged the support provided through the Peacebuilding Fund. The decision by the Security Council, in its resolution [2545 \(2020\)](#), to renew the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia at the request of his Government illustrated the latter’s unwavering commitment to the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The support of the United Nations was essential for ensuring the stabilization and development of those regions of Colombia most affected by violence and poverty. For its part, his Government would continue to allocate all available resources for that purpose.

90. His delegation encouraged Member States to continue to contribute to peacekeeping operations and supported the Secretary-General’s reform of the peace and security pillar. Colombia stood ready to work with liaison officers and observers in missions that were currently deployed, in order to contribute to international peace and security and strengthen the training of police and troops.

91. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to review its communication policies and activities and to disseminate information on the Organization’s work in a timely manner through effective and easily accessible communication channels. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations was an opportunity to showcase the importance of multilateralism, particularly in the light of the challenges presented by the pandemic. His delegation supported efforts to promote the use of Spanish and the other official languages in the work of the United Nations in order to ensure the effective participation of all Member States. Multilingualism was an enabler of multilateral diplomacy and had an important role to play in promoting the values of the United Nations and ensuring that no one was left behind.

92. **Mr. Yabou** (Gambia) said that his country remained committed to contributing troops and police to peacekeeping operations. Member States must work together and redouble their efforts to formulate

sustainable measures aimed at addressing challenges relating to peacekeeping. His delegation supported the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and recognized the contribution of the light coordination mechanism to facilitating strong partnerships for troop-contributing countries in various priority areas of peacekeeping. It welcomed the adoption by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of a restructured report that was more readable and action-oriented.

93. The Gambia was committed to accelerating efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations and therefore welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#). The country’s new peacekeeping policy was intended to ensure that women were recruited, properly trained and appointed to key roles within the Gambia Armed Forces and Gambian peacekeeping contingents. The Gambia supported the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and would continue to ensure that Gambian personnel received gender-sensitive predeployment training aimed at improving conduct and discipline.

94. Strengthened partnerships with regional organizations would improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. His delegation called for even closer cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, particularly with a view to enhancing the response to emergency situations. African Union peace operations authorized by the Security Council should receive funding from the United Nations, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions.

95. With regard to the question of the Sahara, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the ongoing United Nations-led political process, which it was confident would lead to a peaceful, mutually acceptable, realistic and sustainable political solution based on compromise. Resolving the question of the Sahara would require all regional stakeholders to play a positive role in fostering peaceful coexistence and development. Any credible discussion on the Moroccan Sahara must take into consideration the sovereignty and territorial rights of Morocco. The Gambia recognized the efforts made by Morocco to resolve the matter in a constructive manner and stood ready to complement Moroccan efforts to pursue peace and stability in the region. In January 2020, his Government had opened a consulate in the Moroccan city of Dakhla in order to strengthen diplomatic relations between Morocco and the Gambia.

96. His delegation encouraged all stakeholders, in particular neighbouring countries, to propel the ongoing political process forwards. The holding of two round tables with the participation of all the parties was a

positive development; it was encouraging that the parties had agreed to reconvene for a third, although the pandemic would undoubtedly delay such activities. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was a viable compromise solution that took into consideration the desire of the local population for self-determination and that was consistent with international law.

97. **Mr. Namazu** (Japan) said that his Government hoped that the recently concluded agreements normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which included a commitment by Israel to suspend its claim of sovereignty over the West Bank, would ease tensions and stabilize the regional situation. It deplored the continued settlement activities carried out by the Government of Israel, which violated international law and must be completely frozen. Given the lack of momentum in the Middle East peace process, Japan was concerned about the growing sense of isolation of Palestine. The conflict should be resolved through direct negotiations between the parties concerned. His Government supported a two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and known parameters. It would continue to promote confidence-building through its “corridor for peace and prosperity” initiative.

98. Japan was committed to supporting UNRWA, which carried out vital humanitarian work and played an important role in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. Member States must ensure that UNRWA was able to implement its mandate to safeguard the well-being of Palestine refugees. His delegation welcomed the Agency’s efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, amid a sharp increase in cases in the densely populated refugee camps, and expressed its appreciation to UNRWA staff, in particular front-line workers. In 2020 to date, Japan had contributed \$25.8 million to UNRWA, including \$1.81 million to the programme budget to support core services and \$1.54 million to the COVID-19 flash appeal.

99. Owing to the pandemic, the operational environments of peacekeeping missions were harsher than ever. Japan welcomed the progress made with regard to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and emphasized the importance of capacity-building of peacekeepers. To date, 40 per cent of troop-contributing countries had participated in the triangular partnership project, which brought together the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and Member States with particular expertise, including Japan. His country would continue to enhance the capabilities of peacekeepers in such fields as engineering and medical care. The triangular partnership project and the light coordination

mechanism were open to all Member States that were willing to contribute to capacity-building efforts.

100. The United Nations information centres, which provided information on the Organization’s activities in local languages, were playing a vital role in keeping the public informed of efforts to combat the pandemic. His delegation commended the work of the information centre in Tokyo, the only such centre in North-East Asia. It was pleased that the Department of Global Communications had been able to hold the annual Peace Bell ceremony on 17 September 2020, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. With the pandemic exacerbating inequalities and threats to peace everywhere, it was more important than ever for the international community to prioritize cooperation and information-sharing in support of peace and the fight against the pandemic.

101. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation played a commendable role in deepening the world’s understanding of the effects of exposure to ionizing radiation, based on independent and scientific evidence. By providing scientific assessments and reports, it enabled the international community to evaluate radiation risks and establish radiation protection and safety standards. Japan had long been committed to nuclear safety, particularly since the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station in 2011. His delegation looked forward to the publication of an update to the 2013 report of the Scientific Committee ([A/68/46](#)) on the levels and effects of radiation due to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

102. Japan was committed to international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space and believed that international law had an important role to play in ensuring the safety, security, sustainability and stability of outer space. The tremendous scientific, economic and societal benefits from space activities in recent decades would not have been possible without international cooperation. Japan also acknowledged the remarkable work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, whose activities it would continue to support.

103. In recent years, the number of players in the space sector had increased to include academia and industry; a Japanese astronaut was scheduled to board a United States commercial spacecraft to the International Space Station. Nevertheless, the changing space environment and growing scope of space activities presented challenges, such as increased space debris and the potential for misunderstandings and miscalculations. The international community therefore needed to develop a set of principles and best practices. In October

2020, Japan and its international partners had signed the Artemis Accords, which set out principles for cooperation in the civil exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. As a leading space-faring nation, Japan was actively engaged in space cooperation. In the Asia-Pacific region, it was promoting capacity-building, particularly in the area of disaster risk management, as well as information-sharing and mutual understanding.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

104. **Mr. Rogers** (United Kingdom), replying to the comments made by the representatives of Mexico, Paraguay, Ecuador, South Africa, Guatemala and Colombia, said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of both Territories, or regarding the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1 of the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. The United Kingdom remained committed to defending the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to self-determination and their right to determine their own political, social and economic future. That included unequivocal support for the right of the Falkland Islanders to develop their natural resources for their own economic benefit. His Government continued to hope for a stronger, more productive relationship with Argentina, including in relation to the Falkland Islands, something that would be in the interests of all. At the same time, the United Kingdom remained firmly committed to the right of the Falkland Islanders to determine their own future; consequently, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders so wished.

105. The United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago, which had been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius had never held sovereignty over the archipelago, and his Government did not recognize its claim. However, the United Kingdom stood by its long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the territory to Mauritius when it was no longer required for defence purposes.

106. **Ms. Maitra** (India) replying to the comments made by the representative of Pakistan at the previous meeting (A/C.4/75/SR.2), said that the delegation of Pakistan continued to repeat blatant falsehoods and raise irrelevant issues; one wondered whether it had anything

positive or constructive to contribute to the work of the Organization. As a globally recognized hub for terrorism, Pakistan was the largest destabilizing force in the world. The representatives of Pakistan paid hypocritical lip service to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, while back home their Government violated it with impunity, sponsoring cross-border terrorism; glorifying terrorists, such as Usama bin Laden, as martyrs; and unleashing sectarian violence against Muslims and minorities alike.

107. Her delegation completely rejected the malicious references that had been made to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which was an integral and inalienable part of India. The baseless allegations made by the representative of Pakistan regarding matters internal to India were out of order and did not merit a response. Residents of Jammu and Kashmir now enjoyed in full the same freedoms and fundamental rights as all Indian citizens, something that was more than could be said of the beleaguered minorities in Pakistan. The principle of self-determination was a vehicle for the decolonization of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, not a justification for undermining the territorial integrity of any Member State. No amount of desperate propaganda could alter that fact.

108. **Mr. Gutiérrez Segú Berdullas** (Spain), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that Gibraltar was a colony that destroyed the national unity and territorial integrity of Spain and was incompatible with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Since 1964, the Assembly had consistently recommended that the question of Gibraltar be resolved through bilateral negotiations between Spain and the United Kingdom. Only the United Nations could decide when the process of decolonization of Gibraltar was complete. In its resolution 2353 (XXII), the General Assembly had affirmed that any colonial situation that partially or completely destroyed the national unity and territorial integrity of a country was incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Further to the provisions of that resolution, the decolonization of Gibraltar should take place in accordance with the principle of territorial integrity. In the same resolution, the Assembly declared that the holding of the 1967 referendum had contravened various resolutions, including resolution 1514 (XV).

109. The General Assembly had clearly denied the existence of an alleged right to self-determination of the alleged people of Gibraltar. The cession of the Rock had been followed by the expulsion of the population living in Gibraltar and their resettlement in the surrounding

district of Campo de Gibraltar, while settlers had moved into in the areas ceded under article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht. Spain rejected the efforts of the administering Power and the authorities of the colonized Territory to change their political relationship and deny the existence of colonial ties, while at the same time claiming the right to self-determination. The relationship was not a modern one; it was a colonial situation in new garb. Given that Spain was the country whose territory was colonized, Spain was the country with the right to decolonize Gibraltar through the restoration of its national unity and territorial integrity.

110. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that his delegation reiterated the statement made by the President of Argentina to the General Assembly on 22 September 2020. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentine territory and, being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, they were therefore the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two parties, which was recognized by a number of international organizations. That illegal occupation had led the General Assembly to adopt 10 resolutions on the issue, all of which recognized the existence of the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands and called on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. For its part, the Special Committee on decolonization had repeatedly adopted resolutions in the same vein, most recently as contained in its report for 2020 (A/75/23).

111. The principle of self-determination of peoples was inapplicable to the sovereignty dispute, as affirmed in the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions. Unlike other cases of colonialism in which the Assembly had recognized the applicability of the principle of self-determination, none of its resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands made reference thereto. Moreover, in 1985, the Assembly had rejected two proposals seeking to incorporate a reference to the principle of self-determination into resolutions on that question.

112. The 2013 vote in the Malvinas Islands was simply a unilateral action undertaken by the United Kingdom, devoid of any legal value; it in no way changed the essence of the question of the Malvinas, it did not resolve the sovereignty dispute and it had no effect on the legitimate rights of Argentina. The vote had done nothing to change the course of meetings held in the Special Committee since that date, where resolutions on

the question of the Malvinas Islands continued to be approved by consensus in the usual terms. The solution to the sovereignty dispute was not dependent on the results of a vote in which British subjects had been asked whether they wished to remain British. Allowing the British inhabitants of the Islands to arbitrate in a sovereignty dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right to self-determination of peoples, given that the people of the Malvinas were not a people within the meaning of international law.

113. The interests and way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands were adequately addressed by resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Constitution of Argentina. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in resolution 31/49, had called upon the two parties to refrain from introducing unilateral modifications pending the completion of the recommended negotiation process. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were an integral part of its national territory.

114. **Mr. Chaudhary** (Pakistan), replying to the comments made by the representative of India, said that decolonization and the right to self-determination were objectives of such importance that they could not be limited to the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. India had long tried to sell the false narrative that the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir was terrorism. The real reason for the mass indigenous resistance in the Indian-occupied territory was the intransigent denial by India of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who remained resolute in their claim for that inalienable right, despite being subjected to a long list of well-documented crimes that included massacre, rape, torture, mass blinding and forced disappearances.

115. Since its colonization of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, India had tried various tactics to sustain the illegal occupation, including its settler-colonial project, which was aimed at altering the demographics of the territory. Under the garb of development, India was attempting to appropriate the cultural identity and land of the indigenous people of Jammu and Kashmir. India had put the territory under an inhumane military and digital siege, deploying close to 900,000 security forces and shutting it off from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, Pakistan would continue to expose Indian brutality and inform the international community of the plight of Kashmiris. India must release all political prisoners in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, end the human and communication blockade, rescind the law allowing non-Kashmiris to settle in disputed territory, stop

abusing human rights, and end terrorism in Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir was not, and never had been, part of India.

116. The Declaration stated that all peoples had the right to self-determination and that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. The right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been recognized by the Security Council in numerous resolutions, and both Pakistan and India had endorsed that fundamental principle in resolutions of the former United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan. The continued suppression of the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir was thus relevant to the Committee's discussions, and the decolonization agenda would remain incomplete without the just resolution of the dispute. All peoples under colonial administration or foreign occupation must be allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

117. **Mr. Rogers** (United Kingdom), replying to the comments made by the representatives of Argentina and Spain, said that his Government had sovereignty over Gibraltar and the territorial waters surrounding it. As a separate Territory recognized by the United Nations and included since 1946 on its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, Gibraltar enjoyed the rights accorded to it under the Charter of the United Nations. The 2006 Gibraltar Constitution, which had been endorsed in referendum by the people of Gibraltar, provided for a modern and mature relationship between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom. The Government of the United Kingdom restated its long-standing commitment to the people of Gibraltar that it would not enter into arrangements under which they would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes. The United Kingdom also confirmed that it would not enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar was not content. His Government was committed to safeguarding Gibraltar, its people and its economy. The Governments of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar stood ready to engage with Spain to establish new and deeper forms of cooperation to address issues of mutual importance in the wider region through dialogue that fully reflected the wishes, interests, rights and responsibilities of the Government and people of Gibraltar.

118. His Government's relationship with the Falkland Islands, as with all of its Overseas Territories, was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to determine their own future. Reference had been made to various General Assembly resolutions, but none of those modified or

diluted the obligation of nations to respect the legally binding principle of self-determination. That included unequivocal support for the right of the Falkland Islanders to develop their natural resources for their own economic benefit.

119. **Mr. Gutiérrez Segú Berdullas** (Spain) said that, under the Treaty of Utrecht, Spain had ceded only the town and the castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, fortifications and forts thereunto belonging; yet the United Kingdom occupied part of the isthmus and the Spanish territorial sea; it had increased the surface area of the Rock and extended the runway at Gibraltar airport. Spain had repeatedly lodged formal protests against the occupation and had continued to request the restitution of the territories seized from it by force. The British claim to sovereignty over the waters surrounding Gibraltar had no basis in international law or the Treaty of Utrecht. Spain did not recognize any rights of the United Kingdom over the maritime spaces of Gibraltar other than those set out in article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht. Moreover, upon ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Government of Spain had declared that the signing of the Convention could not be interpreted as recognition of any rights or situations relating to the maritime spaces of Gibraltar that were not included in article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht and that resolution III of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was not applicable in the case of the Colony of Gibraltar, which was undergoing a decolonization process in which only the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly applied. Spain had no doubt about the limits of its territory, which included the waters surrounding Gibraltar. Spanish ships had been operating in those waters without incident since time immemorial; the recent controversy had arisen only in response to certain alleged incidents.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.