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Chair: Mr. Sanabria Rivarola (Vice-Chair) (Paraguay)

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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*)*

Agenda item 60: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)*

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*)*

In the absence of Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Mr. Sanabria Rivarola (Paraguay), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications

1. **Ms. Fleming** (Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications) said that the Department of Global Communications welcomed the strong support it had received from Member States in its promotion of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. Another of the Department's current priorities was building public confidence in vaccines, which would support the global effort to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The surge in the spread of misinformation and conspiracies about vaccines had led to a disturbing decline in confidence. Moreover, the rate of vaccination against other diseases was currently on the decline, partly as a result of lockdown measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Her Department, alongside organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was working to build trust in COVID-19 vaccines that were being developed and in other vaccines essential to public health.

2. As part of the Verified project, which was designed to combat misinformation and disinformation and promote the dissemination of reliable information, the Secretary-General would shortly launch the global Pledge to Pause campaign. Pledge to Pause was based on behavioural science, which had shown that human beings were by nature inclined to share information as a means of connecting with others. Social media was the primary vehicle for misinformation. It allowed incorrect information to spread rapidly to many people across great distances, which could severely disrupt government health responses and national economies. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid spread of misinformation could have deadly consequences. Another danger associated with social media was the spread of hate speech and related misinformation, which had a divisive effect on society. The objective of the Pledge to Pause campaign was to encourage people to develop a habit of engaging in a moment of critical thinking before sharing information. If enough people came to consider that practice to be a social norm, it would hugely reduce the spread of misinformation. 130,000 people around the world had already committed to sharing content produced under the Verified project with their communities, and she hoped that government leaders would do likewise.

Agenda item 50: Effects of atomic radiation (continued) ([A/75/46](#))

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (continued) ([A/75/20](#))

Agenda item 52: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) ([A/75/13](#), [A/75/196](#), [A/75/299](#) and [A/75/305](#))

Agenda item 53: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (continued) ([A/75/199](#), [A/75/328](#), [A/75/336](#) and [A/75/376](#))

Agenda item 54: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (continued)

Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of special political missions (continued) ([A/75/312](#))

Agenda item 56: Questions relating to information (continued) ([A/75/21](#) and [A/75/294](#))

Agenda item 57: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (continued) ([A/75/23](#) and [A/75/64](#))

Agenda item 58: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (continued) ([A/75/23](#))

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Agenda item 60: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (continued) ([A/75/74](#) and [A/75/74/Add.1](#))

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](#))

3. **Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) said that broad international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space should be developed. The United Nations should play a central coordinating role in that regard, with the full and effective involvement of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). International law should not be interpreted

in a way that dismissed or called into question the peremptory nature of articles 1 and 2 of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Attempts to revise or replace those principles and norms through their reinterpretation could not be condoned. It was cause for concern that certain States were seeking to establish a framework for the exploitation and use of space resources outside the auspices of the United Nations. As an inalienable part of outer space, space resources, including the resources of the moon and other celestial bodies, were governed fully by the principles and norms of the Outer Space Treaty. It was imperative to prevent outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, from becoming an area of international disagreement and conflict. Forcing the approval of rules and standards for activities relating to space resources, with a focus on business interests, could have serious consequences. The activities of non-governmental entities in outer space must be carried out in conformity with the Outer Space Treaty; such activities required authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate State party.

4. The ongoing crises in the Middle East had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Palestine refugees depended more than ever on the help of the international community. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) should continue its humanitarian work until a just resolution of the refugee issue – which was an integral component of any comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question – had been reached. Adequate funding must therefore be provided for UNRWA. Unlike many international bodies working on humanitarian issues, the Agency had been able to maintain a markedly balanced and impartial approach, avoiding politicization in spite of the pressures it faced and effectively carrying out its mandate. As a permanent member of the Security Council and an active participant in the Quartet, the Russian Federation believed that providing assistance and support to UNRWA would move the Middle East peace process forward on the basis of international law, building a solution based on two States living side by side in peace and security.

5. Despite the unprecedented circumstances, peacekeeping operations and special political missions must continue to evolve in the right direction in accordance with the decisions of Member States. Respect for the sovereignty of host countries was vital. The blue helmets must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the fundamental principles of international peacekeeping,

namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. Her delegation commended the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure the safety of mission personnel and enable them to continue their work during the pandemic. The Russian Federation had supported the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire, which provided a basis for ongoing mediation efforts. Notwithstanding the temporary difficulties arising from the pandemic, the achievements already made in the implementation of peace agreements must be preserved. Trilateral cooperation between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat should be strengthened. At its most recent session, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had emphasized that the views and recommendations expressed by Member States at the high-level meeting on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative held in September 2018 should be taken into account in advancing that initiative. The recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee (A/74/19) should serve as the basis for the future peacekeeping efforts of the Secretariat.

6. The operative steps taken by the Secretariat, including the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, to adapt the information and communications activities of the United Nations to the current circumstances were welcome. While her delegation recognized the importance of the pandemic-related restrictions at United Nations Headquarters, it called on the Secretariat to provide as comfortable a working environment as possible for accredited media and to ensure a gradual return to normal conditions. Disinformation was being spread by certain countries in a shameless attempt to assign blame for the virus. Such a dangerous trend should be countered by promoting reliable information from WHO and other United Nations bodies. The Russian Federation was closely following the Verified initiative and hoped that all content under that campaign would be politically neutral, objective and promptly translated into all six official languages, given the importance of upholding the principle of multilingualism. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations should be widely promoted across the Organization's media outlets, especially given the rise in neo-Nazi movements in a number of European countries.

7. As one of the founders of the Special Committee on decolonization, the Russian Federation attached importance to the vital work of the United Nations in the area of decolonization. Although the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had ended

and the Fourth Decade was beginning, colonialism, which was a shameful relic of the past, had yet to be eradicated, owing to the desire of former colonial Powers to maintain their influence. Until all the territories under the purview of the Committee, including Puerto Rico, had settled the issue of their status, that would remain a vital objective, especially for those whose right to determine their own fate and development path was restricted by the ruling Powers.

8. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal), expressing his country's solidarity with the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories that were still struggling for independence, said that the Special Committee on decolonization must take all possible measures to fulfil its mandate more rapidly. Colonization and foreign domination under any pretext violated the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on decolonization.

9. The Department of Global Communications was playing a crucial role in disseminating accurate, timely and relevant information about the COVID-19 pandemic. Aware of the negative consequences of the spread of misinformation and disinformation, Nepal had joined other Member States in issuing a cross-regional statement on the "infodemic" in the context of the pandemic. His delegation commended the Department for publishing information in 106 languages, including Braille, which broadened its audience and helped to promote multilateralism. His delegation also commended the Department's efforts to promote the work of the United Nations at the grass-roots level by forging meaningful partnerships with young people, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. Nepal thanked the Department for highlighting the contribution of troop- and police-contributing countries in maintaining peace and stability around the world but encouraged it to devise strategies for highlighting the contributions of individual contributing countries in an equitable manner. The Department should also help to bridge the digital gap and reduce inequalities between developed and developing countries.

10. Outer space was a common heritage, whose exploration and use should benefit humanity as a whole. All States, regardless of their size or level of economic or scientific development, should be able to benefit equally from space technology. In that connection, efforts should be made to ensure that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States had fair access to such technology. Space science and technology should be used to improve lives, conserve natural resources and enhance disaster preparedness and mitigation measures.

Improving access to space-related data and technology would promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

11. Nepal had long been a consistent participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations, even in challenging conditions. His delegation commended measures that had been swiftly adopted by the United Nations to protect civilians and peacekeepers during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly since countries experiencing conflict had been disproportionately affected by the virus. The Organization should continue to promote the safety, security and health of peacekeepers, including by providing missions with all necessary medical supplies, while ensuring the ongoing implementation of peacekeeping mandates on the ground. Nepal welcomed the sharp decrease in peacekeeper fatalities, in particular those resulting from deliberate attacks, since 2017.

12. Peacekeeping mandates must be realistic, achievable and supported by the necessary resources. Nepal welcomed the finalization of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework. Peacekeeping was an indispensable tool but must continuously evolve in order to remain effective. Peace missions should facilitate the use of inclusive and nationally owned conflict resolution measures. Lasting peace could only be achieved by addressing the root causes of conflict through participatory political settlements and the integration of prevention strategies into national development plans. The role of the United Nations and the international community should be to help develop domestic capacities in countries affected by conflict.

13. States should not use caveats in order to avoid cooperating in the implementation of peacekeeping mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries must be paid in a timely manner in order to ensure that the operational capacities of peacekeepers were maintained and enhanced. Nationals of troop- and police-contributing countries should be given fair and equitable opportunities to serve in senior positions at the Secretariat and in field missions, in order to enrich those entities, enhance their inclusiveness and boost the morale of peacekeepers. He paid tribute to the peacekeepers who were currently promoting peace and stability around the world and expressed his condolences to the countries and families of the 11 peacekeepers who had lost their lives to COVID-19 while serving in the field.

14. **Mr. Shaddad** (Jordan), underlining the central importance of the Palestinian question, said that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace could be achieved only through the two-State solution, leading to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the internationally agreed terms of reference. Building and expanding illegal settlements, confiscating Palestinian land and demolishing homes could not lead to peace, while annexing the occupied Syrian Golan and vowing to annex the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea would certainly not bring about security.

15. Jordan condemned the Israeli Government's decision to build 4,900 new settlement units in the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, further undermining the two-State solution and opportunities to achieve a comprehensive peace. It demanded that the international community unequivocally reject such actions and exert pressure on Israel to desist.

16. Recalling the historic role of the Hashemite Kingdom as custodian of the Islamic and Christian holy sites, he emphasized that any attacks or violations against Jerusalem or its holy sites were unacceptable and that his Government would use all options at its disposal to oppose such acts.

17. The Palestine refugee question and the work of UNRWA were among his Government's top foreign policy priorities. Jordan was committed to mobilizing international political and financial support for the Agency in order to enable it to continue fulfilling its mandate to provide vital education, health and other services to 5.5 million Palestine refugees, thereby upholding their right to a life with dignity.

18. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Jordan and Sweden had hosted a third ministerial strategic dialogue to mobilize support for UNRWA and find practical ways to help the Agency overcome its financial challenges. UNRWA must continue to provide services until a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine refugees was found, in accordance with international law and the agreed terms of reference. If the Agency was unable to carry out its mandate of providing vital services to Palestine refugees in its fields of operation, that could have dire repercussions. He therefore urged all States to fulfil their pledges as soon as possible in order to ensure the Agency's continued operation and meet its emergency needs to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

19. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan welcomed the constructive engagement of the fraternal Kingdom of Morocco, which had proposed the Moroccan autonomy initiative in its effort to reach a definitive political solution to the question of the Sahara, based on compromise. His Government endorsed the initiative as a serious, realistic mechanism that took into account regional specificities and Moroccan sovereignty and territorial integrity. The initiative was in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Organization. The measures taken by Morocco to improve the living standards of the Saharan population, enable it to benefit from the region's resources and combat the COVID-19 pandemic were equally commendable. Lastly, Jordan welcomed the contribution of the Secretary-General to achieving progress in the political process. That process had been imbued with new momentum by the round tables held in 2018 and 2019, in which all stakeholders had participated constructively.

20. **Mr. Tiare** (Burkina Faso), reaffirming his country's solidarity with the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories which aspired to decide their own fate, said that the United Nations must continue to support peoples that were still living under colonial rule on their paths to self-determination. Decolonization was a long process that required all parties to engage in dialogue and collaboration in order to find a realistic and pragmatic solution based on compromise.

21. On the question of Western Sahara, his delegation supported the ongoing political process conducted under the exclusive auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, aimed at achieving a mutually acceptable and negotiated political solution to the dispute. Burkina Faso welcomed the convening of the two round tables involving Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario and called on the next Personal Envoy to facilitate the resumption of negotiations at a third round table. His delegation endorsed the request of the Security Council for the four parties to remain engaged throughout the duration of the process and reaffirmed its support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative, which the Security Council considered to be serious and credible. Burkina Faso welcomed the efforts of Morocco to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Sahara and the substantial advances it had made with regard to the socioeconomic development of the population.

22. His delegation commended the Department of Peace Operations for ensuring an excellent level of operational continuity, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on troop rotations. Burkina Faso would continue to deploy troops and legal experts to help establish peace around the world, while also

addressing a challenging domestic security situation. His delegation paid tribute to peacekeepers around the world, including the 1,130 currently deployed from Burkina Faso, who were facing even greater risks than usual as a result of the pandemic. His Government placed great importance on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), on women and peace and security, and was working to increase the number of women in its deployments, in particular in its police contingents. Burkina Faso was also the current Chair of the Group of Friends of Corrections in Peace Operations, whose activities included providing guidance and support to United Nations entities.

23. The Department of Global Communications should ensure the equitable treatment of the six official languages in all its activities. The COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in challenges to multilingualism at United Nations Headquarters and in the field. Multilingualism was an intrinsic part of multilateralism and the United Nations must continue to promote it, even in the current unforeseen circumstances. In the field, reliable information should be shared in all languages in a timely manner in order to reach every segment of society, including the most vulnerable groups.

24. While there was currently an emphasis on using new information and communications technology tools to reach a broader audience, it must be borne in mind that many people in developing countries did not have access to advanced technology. It was therefore important to continue to provide information through traditional media, in local languages. The United Nations information centres played an important role in that regard. The information centre in Ouagadougou, which covered Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, would benefit from increased human and technical capacities in order to better fulfil its strategic role during the current security, humanitarian and health crises in the region. Peacekeeping and multilingualism were related, as it was essential for peacekeepers to be able to communicate with the local civilian populations. In that connection, it should be borne in mind that three of the largest peacekeeping missions were in French-speaking countries.

25. **Ms. Maitra** (India) said that her country, a major spacefaring nation, sought to use space technology to promote good governance and national development and to benefit humankind as a whole. Over the past year, India had launched 2 satellites of its own and 22 belonging to other countries. Given the new challenges that had arisen in relation to outer space, it was more important than ever to implement the relevant United Nations space treaties. It was also essential to reach an international consensus on space issues, including

through the current initiatives and deliberations of COPUOS.

26. Her delegation commended the efforts of UNRWA to enable millions of Palestinians to live lives of dignity. The Agency's work had become even more relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic. The dire financial situation of UNRWA seemed to worsen with every passing year. She encouraged regular donors to reiterate their political and financial support for UNRWA and urged other Member States to consider making voluntary contributions. India had increased its annual contributions to UNRWA from \$1.25 million to \$5 million in recent years. Her Government's support for the Agency was not only an expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people but also an investment in peace and stability in the region. A durable solution to the Palestine refugee question could be achieved only through the establishment of a Palestinian State within mutually agreed borders, existing side by side and at peace with Israel. The international community must ensure the prompt resumption of negotiations to that end.

27. India commended the professionalism, dedication and courage of peacekeepers. While considerable progress had been made in addressing the issue of delayed payments for peacekeeping operations, more needed to be done, particularly with regard to closed peacekeeping missions. Her delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to address issues that had affected its functioning. In order to maintain its credibility and relevance, the Special Committee should take a broad-based approach to its work, rather than a regional one. Priorities in the implementation of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative should include eliminating national caveats; establishing incentives for women peacekeepers; conducting a comprehensive medical mapping exercise in respect of all missions; and ensuring that the performance and accountability mechanism took into account all stakeholders and all phases of peacekeeping operations.

28. Her delegation welcomed the measures being taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on special political missions. The principles of impartiality, consent of the parties, national ownership and national responsibility should be paramount at every stage of such missions. Moreover, their budgets should not be handled in the current ad hoc manner. Instead, special political missions should benefit from a separate account aligned with the peacekeeping budget cycle and the scale of peacekeeping operations, in order to enhance budget transparency.

29. India welcomed the Verified initiative and other efforts of the Department of Global Communications to help position the United Nations as the most authoritative source of information. She encouraged the Department to work with field missions to develop communications strategies to counter anti-United Nations propaganda, which was one of the causes of the increase in attacks against peacekeepers. With regard to multilingualism, India worked with the Department of Global Communications to provide news and multimedia content in Hindi through the United Nations News portal and social media accounts. That initiative was a success; the United Nations Hindi-language Twitter account currently had more than 5 million followers. The Department should consider increasing its coverage of the remarkable progress that had been achieved through South-South cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

30. Since gaining independence, India had always been at the forefront of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Although the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was reaching an end, the process of decolonization had not yet been completed. A pragmatic approach to decolonization would surely allow the legitimate wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to be fulfilled. Cooperation with international agencies and actors should be enhanced with a view to channelling resources for building the capacities of the Territories.

31. Since a particular delegation continued to deliberately misinterpret the principle of self-determination, her delegation wished to highlight that the United Nations had established that principle as a vehicle for promoting the decolonization of the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, not as a justification for undermining the territorial integrity of any Member State.

32. **Ms. Sulaiman** (Brunei Darussalam) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, while straining the capacities of hospitals and medical centres worldwide, had left refugees, who had little to no access to health care, particularly vulnerable. In that regard, she noted the work of UNRWA, which had continued to fulfil its mandate, while adapting the scope of its responsibilities during the pandemic. It continued to provide health care, food distribution and educational services, including a successful distance learning programme, to 5.6 million refugees. UNRWA front-line personnel had demonstrated innovation and commitment in providing assistance while adhering to the safety guidelines established by WHO, even in the overcrowded refugee camps. The Agency's mandate should therefore be renewed. Given the financial difficulties it had faced at the start of 2020

and the increase in its operational costs as a result of the pandemic, the Agency must be provided with adequate resources. In 2019, her Government had contributed \$1.8 million to UNRWA in order to ensure that it had predictable and sustainable funding to fulfil its mandate in the coming years. Brunei Darussalam had also participated in the virtual ministerial pledging conference held in June 2020. She thanked the Agency for continuing to bring stability to the region and to the daily lives of the Palestine refugees.

33. Much remained to be done to translate the increasing international recognition of the State of Palestine into positive changes on the ground. As part of their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States must ensure the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Palestinian people to live peaceful and dignified lives, with access to basic health care, education, food and decent work. To that end, Brunei Darussalam called on the occupying Power to comply with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions by ending its occupation of the Palestinian territories and by ceasing all settlement activity and other illegal and unfair practices that were negatively affecting Palestinians. Brunei Darussalam supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign State. Her Government was in favour of the achievement of a two-State solution based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

34. United Nations peacekeeping operations played an important role in maintaining international peace and security, a central priority of the Organization. She expressed gratitude to the courageous personnel who served in such operations. Brunei Darussalam would continue to support United Nations peacekeeping within its capabilities, through financial contributions and the provision of troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) under the Malaysian contingent.

35. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia) said that collective and timely international action was required to address the broad range of challenges faced worldwide. United Nations peacekeeping missions were one of the most effective methods of maintaining international peace and security, as they promoted the de-escalation and cessation of armed conflicts, provided the necessary conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and improved people's livelihoods. As a responsible member of the international community, his Government supported and participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations as a matter of policy

and had made a commitment in its action plan for 2020–2024 to increase its active engagement. Since 2002, Mongolia had contributed more than 18,000 military personnel, including 714 women, to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

36. His Government supported the steps taken by the Secretary-General, under his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of peacekeeping operations, and improve the performance of peacekeepers. His Government also welcomed the call by Member States for collective action by all peacekeeping stakeholders to implement the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), his Government had made every effort to increase the representation of female service personnel among its peacekeeping forces. Women currently accounted for 8 per cent of the total Mongolian contingent in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

37. Mongolia attached great importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers, particularly given the unstable operational and security environments in which they served. It therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of the performance of peacekeeping missions. Mongolia also commended the Secretary-General, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support for the timely measures they had taken to protect United Nations personnel from the COVID-19 pandemic, measures which had kept infection rates moderately low. As the virus continued to spread in regions in which peacekeeping missions were located, the Secretary-General should continue to improve medical capacities in the areas surrounding the missions and to ensure the safety, health and security of peacekeepers. Mongolia and its peacekeepers fully supported and adhered to United Nations recommendations for preventing the spread of the virus.

38. His Government provided peacekeeping training opportunities for personnel from throughout the region. Since 2006, annual United Nations peacekeeping exercises for military personnel from China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and over 50 other countries had been hosted by the Mongolian Armed Forces at its peacekeeping training centre, which had become a point of reference for peacekeeping training in the region.

39. His country's cooperation with the United Nations had been deepened by the participation of the Mongolian Minister of Defence at the 2019 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference and other

relevant meetings. His Government aimed to further increase its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations and had a rapid deployment force company, an engineering company and a level-two field hospital registered in the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. Mongolian peacekeepers in UNMISS were currently playing an important role in strengthening the armistice in South Sudan and protecting civilians, United Nations personnel and NGO workers.

40. **Ms. Chang Yuen Yi** (Singapore) said that, like many other countries, Singapore depended on space-based technologies and applications to support important civilian and government functions. Collective efforts must be made to address challenges such as the increasing amount of space debris and orbital congestion, and to preserve global access to outer space.

41. Small States could play a part in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space. Singapore was involved in a broad range of space-related activities, including the design and manufacture of space components and the provision of satellite-based services. Singapore also had a vibrant scientific community engaged in space-related research. The Satellite Research Centre of Nanyang Technological University and the Satellite Technology and Research Centre of the National University of Singapore had collaborated closely with overseas research institutes and space agencies. Singapore was also implementing innovative space technologies. For example, in 2019, the Centre for Quantum Technologies of the National University of Singapore had launched a nanosatellite into low Earth orbit from the International Space Station. On board the satellite, researchers had generated and detected pairs of photons with the quantum property of entanglement, a development that signalled the possibility of the attainment of quantum communications capacities within the next decade.

42. Singapore was investing in research and development to increase its space capabilities and enhance its partnerships with industry stakeholders. Her Government also sought to establish stronger cooperation on outer space issues with partners in the region and beyond, and to achieve consensus on international norms regarding space activities. As a new member of COPUOS, Singapore would contribute constructively to the work of that Committee and its Subcommittees. To ensure a coordinated national approach, her Government had centralized responsibility for space-related matters under the Office for Space Technology and Industry. As the world became increasingly reliant on outer space infrastructure, it was important to encourage the responsible use and exploration of outer space for the benefit of humankind.

Outer space should be preserved as a peaceful global commons, and Singapore supported the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen international space law.

43. For 72 years, United Nations peacekeeping efforts had played a critical role in maintaining global peace and security; those efforts were now more important than ever. In that regard, the steps taken by peacekeeping missions, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support to implement the Action for Peacekeeping initiative were encouraging. Furthermore, improved approaches to peacekeeping training and the provision of specialized equipment had helped to reduce peacekeeper fatalities resulting from violent acts. Singapore was encouraged by the finalization of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework and by the use of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System to improve the performance of peacekeeping missions. Her delegation also welcomed the increased participation of women in peace and political processes in the context of peacekeeping, as well as the adoption of Security Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#) on the role of women in peacekeeping.

44. Despite being a small country with limited resources, Singapore made meaningful contributions to peacekeeping. Over the past 30 years, it had deployed more than 2,000 military and police personnel to 17 peacekeeping and observer missions to provide medical support, assist in national reconciliation processes and ensure the security and integrity of United Nations-sponsored elections, among other functions. In addition, Singapore supported multinational peace initiatives such as the Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 151, established by the Security Council to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden. It had also collaborated with the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support on the development of a software application to enhance the efficiency of casualty reporting, which had been operationalized across all United Nations peacekeeping missions. In partnership with the Department of Peace Operations, her Government had prepared manuals aimed at specific United Nations military units, with the goal of improving adherence to peacekeeping doctrine. In November 2018, Singapore had participated in a training session on the operation of heavy engineering equipment hosted by Viet Nam within the framework of the triangular partnership project.

45. Even as the United Nations sought to improve the efficiency and accountability of peacekeeping operations, it must ensure that peacekeepers were able to carry out their responsibilities safely and securely. Singapore therefore called on all Member States to fulfil

their legal and financial obligations related to peacekeeping in full, on time and without conditions.

46. **Ms. Thinn** (Myanmar) said that special political missions played an important role in promoting peace and security at the international, regional and national levels. Such missions must work closely with stakeholders at all levels in carrying out their mandates. Her delegation noted the efforts made by special political missions to harness technology in order to communicate with various stakeholders, including women and civil society groups, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It welcomed the holding of the seventh annual interactive dialogue on special political missions, in a virtual format, in June 2020. Her delegation appreciated the efforts of special political missions to promote the inclusion of women, in accordance with Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), and their increasing engagement with youth, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#).

47. Her Government was cooperating in good faith with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar, the fourth to be appointed since 1995, and would continue to support her efforts to fulfil her mandate. The recently established office of the Special Envoy in Nay Pyi Taw had been fully operational since January 2019. The Government had fully cooperated with the Special Envoy during all the visits she had conducted since assuming office, including by organizing meetings with the relevant authorities and stakeholders from various communities and arranging visits to Rakhine and Kachin States.

48. Her Government appreciated the support of the Special Envoy for its efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic through a whole-of-nation approach, and welcomed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. In that regard, the Myanmar Armed Forces had declared a ceasefire from 10 May to 31 August 2020 throughout the country, except in the areas in which terrorists were operating, including northern Rakhine State. The Armed Forces had extended the ceasefire twice, first until the end of September and then until the end of October, demonstrating the country's commitment to ensuring sustainable peace and to containing the spread of COVID-19. However, Myanmar could not condone terrorism in any form or under any circumstances. The present humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State was the result of the coordinated and armed attacks carried out by the terrorist group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army on 30 police outposts on 25 August 2017, which had resulted in the displacement of many people from Rakhine. Her Government remained confident that the mutual trust

and understanding between it and the Special Envoy would contribute to the achievement of a peaceful and lasting solution to the challenges in Rakhine State.

49. Myanmar appreciated the critical role of the Committee on Information in overseeing the work of the Department of Global Communications and welcomed the holding of the forty-second session of the Committee, in a virtual format, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Myanmar also appreciated the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to provide the public with comprehensive, balanced, timely, relevant and transparent information in multiple languages, even during the pandemic. It welcomed the steps the Department had taken, in coordination with the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and other United Nations entities, to promote the work of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, combat sexual exploitation and abuse, raise awareness of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and protect the rights of victims of terrorism. In order to enable all countries, in particular the least developed, to harness the full potential of digitalization, stakeholders should work together, within the scope of their mandates and available resources, to comprehensively assess and bridge the digital divide, which had been exacerbated by the pandemic.

50. The Department of Global Communications should continue its efforts to disseminate factual, accurate, dependable and credible information to a global audience, in accordance with the principles of objectivity, impartiality and neutrality. In that regard, the Department was to be commended for launching its Verified campaign to combat misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her Government had itself been taking steps to combat disinformation and hate speech, including by issuing related regulations and ordering state and regional governments to encourage their employees to participate in and support anti-hate-speech activities. General elections would be held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020, in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, credibility and the free expression of the will of the people. The Union Election Commission of Myanmar had been cooperating closely with the Ministry of Information to provide timely and reliable information to the public regarding the elections. In order to prevent the outbreak of conflict as a result of hate speech, disinformation and misinformation, the Commission was also working with the Myanmar Press Council and a team established by Facebook to monitor the use of social media in the country.

51. The mobile phone penetration rate in Myanmar had grown rapidly in recent years and was now 157 per cent, accounting for over 96 per cent of the population; the affordability and quality of service had also improved. Discussions and training courses relating to media had been organized, and media-sector personnel had been involved in the drafting of relevant laws. In addition, the eighth conference on media development in Myanmar, on the theme of media and elections, had been held in Nay Pyi Taw in August 2020.

52. **Mr. Dvornik** (Ukraine) said that he commended the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and its secretariat for continuing their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, he welcomed the expansion of the scope of research of the Scientific Committee, which had initiated three new scientific evaluations, in addition to its four ongoing evaluations. As an active member of the Scientific Committee, Ukraine would contribute to the updating and consolidation of the findings of its assessments of the radiological consequences of nuclear accidents. Although it was important for certain Member States to be able to attend the sessions of the Scientific Committee as observers, decisions to invite observers to become members of the Committee should be taken in accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations and with the criteria and indicators set forth in the report of the Secretary-General on the membership of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and the financial implications of increased membership ([A/66/524](#)).

53. Member States should continue to engage in inclusive dialogue and meaningful cooperation within the framework of COPUOS, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the world in 2020, dialogue with individuals, businesses and officials from aggressor States, in particular those subject to sanctions owing to their violations of international law, must never be legitimized. Since the beginning of the illegal temporary occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, Ukraine had lost control of its space facilities on the Crimean Peninsula, including the NIP-16 facility, which had been built in the 1960s to track space probes and which, until 2014, had been transparently managed by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in accordance with the principle of the peaceful uses of outer space. The facility was now controlled by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, which was reportedly planning to integrate it into its own network in 2020, an illegal act that illustrated that country's intention to increase its military footprint in

occupied Crimea and outer space. Ukraine was nevertheless making positive advances in the space domain, in particular in the restoration of its space and rocket science capabilities, including by cooperating on a number of multilateral projects. The international community should begin drafting a comprehensive, legally binding document combining the five existing United Nations treaties on outer space, together with additional provisions relating to current trends in outer space activities.

54. Peacekeeping was one of the Organization's most valuable and efficient tools for responding to conflicts and other security threats. Despite being compelled to defend its independence and territorial integrity in response to the armed aggression against it, Ukraine continued to contribute actively to United Nations peacekeeping. Indeed, more than 300 Ukrainian men and women currently served in six peacekeeping missions worldwide. It was nevertheless essential to improve the accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#). Ukraine had been among the first States to endorse the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, and expected that that initiative would yield practical results, in particular improved force generation, including for aviation units. It was also important to develop the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capacities of peacekeeping operations, reduce their environmental impact and ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers, including in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

55. Ukraine welcomed the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to update the information policies of the United Nations, efforts that were all the more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Attempts had been made to exploit the pandemic in order to disseminate hostile propaganda and disinformation, generate panic and sow distrust among democratic nations, including through the use of bot and troll factories. Indeed, such aggressive tactics had been used against Ukraine since 2014. Ukraine welcomed the initiation of the Verified campaign to combat the spread of misinformation, which had affected public awareness of the pandemic and thus undermined the effectiveness of the response. Ukraine had also been among the majority of United Nations Member States that had endorsed a cross-regional statement on the "infodemic" in the context of the pandemic. A global and systematic approach was required to address the use of disinformation to undermine public peace and security,

a practice which undermined the values of the United Nations.

56. Propaganda and disinformation should also be clearly disassociated from professional journalism. Freedom of expression must be respected, and free, independent and pluralistic media must be protected. Although Ukraine had consistently taken steps to ensure a safe environment for free media, it was deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation with regard to freedom of expression and professional journalism in the occupied territories of Ukraine, in particular Crimea and Donbas, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine ([A/74/276](#)). The occupying Power had demonstrated its unwillingness to heed the call of the international community to ensure a safe environment for independent and pluralistic media, having illegally detained at least 11 Crimean Tatar journalists. Ukraine called for the immediate release of all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens and for the halting of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied territories of Ukraine.

57. **Mr. de Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was the most suitable body for the consideration of all aspects of peacekeeping operations. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative had led to tangible improvements in the safety and security of peacekeepers, as evidenced by the steady drop in the number of attacks against them since its adoption. However, given the great loss represented by each fallen soldier, troops should not be deployed without training appropriate to the operating environments in which they were to serve. Through its Peace Operations Joint Training Centre and the Peacekeeping Training Centre of the Brazilian Navy, Brazil would continue to offer peacekeeping training courses on its territory and to deploy mobile training teams to the field. The Special Committee had a particular responsibility to ensure that the United Nations had the necessary tools to prevent and punish sexual exploitation and abuse. The number of women in peacekeeping missions must be increased, in line with the women and peace and security agenda. In that connection, Brazil welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#), the first United Nations resolution focusing exclusively on the role of women in peacekeeping.

58. Special political missions had played an increasingly important role in the promotion of international peace and security in recent years, serving as effective tools of both preventive diplomacy and

post-conflict peacebuilding. Those missions operated under a hybrid system whereby, like peacekeeping operations, they were established by the Security Council but, instead of being financed under the peacekeeping budget, they were financed under the regular budget. That created an imbalance whereby only a small number of Member States took part in decisions to establish special political missions but the entire United Nations membership was responsible for their funding. The Organization's wider membership should therefore engage more actively in discussions on special political missions, in particular in the General Assembly and its Fourth Committee.

59. As Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Brazil was helping the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to fulfil its mandate. In Haiti, Brazil was proud to have supported the transition to a special political mission – the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) – after 15 consecutive years of peacekeeping operations, which was a landmark in United Nations history. His delegation also wished to highlight the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in monitoring the implementation of the hard-won Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace reached between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP).

60. In 2020, in addition to providing other basic services to Palestine refugees, UNRWA had shouldered the responsibility of helping them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which had further increased its costs at a time of financial strain. As a member of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA, Brazil stood ready to cooperate with the Agency, in accordance with its capabilities. Earlier in 2020, Brazil had made a donation in response to the Agency's emergency appeal for funds to support its efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19.

61. Multilingualism was a fundamental value of the United Nations. In that regard, United Nations information centres played an important role in disseminating messages in local languages to local populations, in particular in developing countries. Specifically, the information centres in Rio de Janeiro and Luanda were to be commended for sharing valuable information about the work of the United Nations with Portuguese-speaking audiences all over the world. Portuguese was spoken by approximately 260 million people worldwide and was the most spoken language in the southern hemisphere. Brazil strongly supported the United Nations News station in Portuguese, which had

the third-largest audience of all United Nations News stations.

62. His Government reiterated its long-standing and firm support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in relation to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. As the "special and particular" colonial situation in question involved a sovereignty dispute that had lasted for nearly 200 years, the principle of self-determination was not applicable. In that regard, it was important to recall that the British population on the Islands had been implanted during an illegal occupation. Furthermore, since the Malvinas formed part of the territory of Argentina, the principle of territorial integrity was applicable. Brazil therefore called on both parties to resume negotiations. Resolution of the dispute depended on dialogue between the two parties and the completion of the Secretary-General's good offices mission, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/9. In that regard, Brazil acknowledged the efforts of Argentina and the United Kingdom to strengthen bilateral relations and reach practical agreements. It hoped that improvements in the relationship between the two countries would help to establish the conditions necessary to resume negotiations with a view to returning full sovereignty over the Islands to Argentina, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

63. Brazil was concerned at the violations of General Assembly resolution 31/49, in which the Assembly had called on the parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation of the Islands. In that regard, his Government urged the United Kingdom to cease its unilateral exploration and exploitation of natural resources in the disputed area. Furthermore, in a spirit of solidarity with Argentina, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49, Brazil did not authorize the use of its ports or airports by vessels or aircraft heading to the Malvinas Islands unless they complied with that resolution.

64. The South Atlantic was a zone of peace and cooperation, free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and dedicated to harmony and the peaceful settlement of disputes, principles embodied by Latin America, the Caribbean and the African countries of the South Atlantic. The resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom was the only viable way to resolve the question of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in

accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

65. **Ms. Cerrato** (Honduras) said that the United Nations must ensure the continuation of ongoing self-determination and independence processes. The continued existence of Territories without the right to self-determination hindered the decolonization process, which should be completed through continuous dialogue between the administering Powers, the Special Committee on decolonization and the peoples of the Territories themselves, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

66. Honduras appreciated the valuable work done by the Special Committee on decolonization in its consideration of the question of the Malvinas Islands since the adoption, in 1965, of General Assembly resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#). Honduras strongly supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and had assured Argentina of its support in various multilateral forums. Honduras recognized the efforts of United Nations entities to advance decolonization and urged all Member States to support that work.

67. Honduras had become a member of the Committee on Information in 2020. The Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications was to be commended for her leadership at a time when objective and trustworthy information was more essential than ever. The Department of Global Communications had continued to disseminate valuable information on matters of importance to the international community, including the activities of the United Nations and their impact on people worldwide. The Department was also adapting effectively to virtual methods of coverage, interpretation and dissemination of information in response to the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department had responded flexibly to the pandemic by launching its Verified initiative, designed to encourage the sharing of convincing and science-based information. As multilingualism was one of the key drivers of unity and mutual understanding at the United Nations, the Department should continue to uphold that principle by encouraging parity in the use of the six official languages, including in discussions held in virtual formats.

68. The Under-Secretaries-General for Peace Operations and Operational Support were to be commended for the prompt steps they had taken to protect peacekeepers and local populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Honduras had supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, which

had created the conditions necessary for diplomacy in order to protect the most vulnerable, facilitating humanitarian access and mobilizing collective efforts to combat the pandemic. Strategies to prepare for such health crises and other emergencies should be developed during the planning and formulation of the mandates of peacekeeping missions. Missions must be efficient and flexible, with clear requirements for personnel and host countries, and characterized by advance planning, appropriate capacities and suitably trained personnel. Peacekeeping was a collective effort involving Member States, the Secretariat and peacekeeping missions. Honduras noted the new integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework, which included stronger wording in relation to political matters, mandates, the provision of resources, performance and the link between performance and capacity-building. The implementation of that framework was critical to the advancement of the objectives of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

69. Member States must implement Security Council [1325 \(2000\)](#) and subsequent related resolutions in which the Council had highlighted the need for women to be active agents in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and in conflict prevention and resolution. Twenty years since the adoption of that resolution, the number of female staff officers and military observers had increased. Further progress should be made in that regard, given the significant value contributed by women to peacekeeping. Honduras paid tribute to all peacekeepers, including those who had lost their lives in the cause of peace, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Peace and development were interlinked; the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved in unstable, conflict-affected areas. Peace and security were prerequisites for the mobilization of adequate resources and the development of the cooperation required to implement the 2030 Agenda.

70. **Ms. Núñez Rivas** (Uruguay) said that, while the United Nations had helped more than 80 former colonies to achieve self-determination, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained to be decolonized. In 2020, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization, the final year of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the international community must reaffirm its commitment to eliminating colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

71. Uruguay fully supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Its claim was

geographically, historically and legally justified. Countless studies had demonstrated the direct link between the situation of the Malvinas Islands and the territorial integrity of Argentina, which had clearly inherited the rights of Spain over the Islands. Uruguay commended Argentina and the United Kingdom for their cooperation on cultural, scientific and humanitarian endeavours, in particular their joint efforts to identify unknown Argentine soldiers buried in Darwin cemetery, an initiative that had helped to settle a painful debt to the families of the soldiers who had fallen during the Malvinas War. She hoped that the increasing cooperation between the two parties would foster an atmosphere of trust and ultimately enable the achievement of a just, peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute.

72. Her delegation recognized the efforts made by the Secretariat to address the safety, security and logistical challenges faced by peacekeepers during the COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce the spread of the virus. Uruguay had taken steps to protect its own peacekeepers by introducing new medical testing requirements and security protocols before, during and after deployment, including compulsory COVID-19 testing of all personnel prior to deployment. A specific module on pandemic prevention had also been incorporated into the pre-deployment courses offered through the national peacekeeping training centre. Furthermore, her Government had provided funding for the establishment of a field laboratory for COVID-19 testing in peacekeeping operations, which would soon be set up.

73. The pandemic had highlighted the existence of systemic challenges faced by peacekeeping operations in such areas as politics; women, peace and security; performance and accountability; and partnerships, as already identified in the Declaration of Shared Commitments under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In accordance with Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), Uruguay had increased the representation of women in the national armed forces and in peacekeeping operations; the proportion of women deployed by Uruguay in peacekeeping missions was now higher than the average for all troop-contributing countries. As a co-facilitator of the discussions on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and an endorser of the Declaration of Shared Commitments, Uruguay would continue to support their implementation.

74. Uruguay welcomed the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. As current Chair of the Fifth Committee, which played an important role in determining the budgets of peacekeeping operations, Uruguay would do its best to

promote deliberations that resulted in the provision of the necessary resources. The 2021 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference would provide an opportunity for Member States to strengthen the performance and impact of peacekeeping operations. As a co-host of the preparatory meetings for that Conference, Uruguay would work to ensure its success and to evaluate commitments.

75. Uruguay welcomed the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to provide accessible, timely and factual information on the role of the United Nations in resolving global issues. In particular, her delegation welcomed the Department's 2020 global communications strategy and its communications campaigns covering such issues as human rights, violence against women and girls, sustainable development, climate change and peacekeeping. The Department should continue its efforts to mainstream multilingualism in all information and communications activities in order to reach as many people as possible. Her delegation welcomed the role of the United Nations information centres and their integration into the resident coordinator system, which had ensured coordinated, coherent, strategic and effective communications and had led to the increased participation of youth. The centres helped to give a national dimension to global messages and bring the United Nations closer to local populations by providing information in local languages. The flow of objective, reliable and transparent information on the work of the United Nations would promote greater trust in multilateralism and thereby enable the Organization to address global challenges which, now more than ever, required cooperation and mutual understanding among people.

76. **Ms. Manav** (Turkey) said that her Government maintained its long-standing position that the only way to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East was through a two-State solution entailing the establishment of an independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Israeli occupation was depriving Palestinians of their freedom and the enjoyment of their right to a decent life. Palestinians in the occupied territories were living in a permanent state of emergency. They were subjected to arbitrary arrest, movement restrictions, attacks by settlers and the demolition of their homes. The situation had become even more dire since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the situation in Gaza being particularly fragile. There could be no justification for the Israeli practice of targeting civilians, as it was a violation of international law.

77. In order for any peace initiative to succeed, it must reinforce the parameters established through the relevant United Nations resolutions. Agreements to normalize relations between Israel and other States would therefore not help end the conflict, as they were an impediment to the implementation of the two-State solution. While such agreements had resulted in the suspension of the annexation process, they had not eliminated the possibility of its being resumed. Israel was actually paving the way for future annexation by continuing to construct illegal settlements. The international community must take all necessary measures to put an end to the expansion of such settlements. Turkey would continue to support the Palestinian people in its quest for protection and accountability.

78. In the light of the precariousness of the current situation, the continuation of the services provided by UNRWA was more important than ever. The Agency had proved its worth by carrying out valuable work to counter the negative effects of the occupation for more than 70 years, and it deserved greater international support. A course should be set to ensure predictable and sustained financing to enable UNRWA to fulfil its mandate. As Chair of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, Turkey had focused on efforts to ensure predictable funding and expand the donor base. The Agency would not be able to address its financial deficit and ensure the continuity of critical services without an increase in voluntary contributions. In that connection, her Government had increased its contributions tenfold over the past three years.

79. The focus on the financial difficulties of UNRWA should not distract attention from the root causes of the problems that the Agency was addressing, namely the continued Israeli occupation and the lack of progress with regard to the peace process. It was incumbent upon the international community to ensure that the letter and spirit of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative were not undermined in any way.

80. The COVID-19 pandemic had placed many Palestine refugees in even more desperate situations than before and had led some of them to undertake dangerous boat journeys across the Mediterranean. Reports and images indicated that some of those vulnerable people had been abandoned at sea in bad conditions. Such actions were violations of international law and must stop immediately.

81. While the United Nations had made significant progress in adapting peacekeeping operations to address new challenges, there was still room for improvement. Her delegation fully endorsed the Secretary-General's

Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which had done much to foster collective engagement and political commitment. Turkey also welcomed the development of closer links with regional organizations, in particular the African Union, which had helped improve strategic planning and communication. Turkey looked forward to the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture, which should result in a new set of standards for peacebuilding efforts.

82. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia unequivocally supported the achievement of a just, comprehensive and inclusive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the coexistence of two States, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. 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](#)) was a sad reminder of the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Decades of illegal occupation, expanding settlements, demolitions and displacement had contributed to the severe deterioration of the living conditions of millions of Palestinians, in particular women and children.

83. As recommended by the Secretary-General, Israel must end its illegal occupation, which was the root cause of the conflict, and its creeping annexation of the occupied land. The international community must make concerted efforts to hold Israel accountable for the human rights violations it had committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The role of UNRWA was more important than ever, particularly given the drastic increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in recent months, a development that had compounded the challenges faced by Palestine refugees. The Agency should therefore be provided with sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding so that it could fulfil its mandate effectively and transparently. His Government was committed to providing financial and political support for the Agency's work, as it viewed supporting UNRWA as essential to supporting Palestine.

84. Indonesia attached great importance to decolonization and to the work of the related Special Committee. The situations of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories should be resolved on a case-by-case basis through intensive collaboration between the administering Powers, the Territories themselves and the international community, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

85. Training and capacity-building were essential to improving the performance of peacekeeping operations and to ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers. Stronger partnerships in training and capacity-building, including under the triangular partnership project and bilateral and regional frameworks, should therefore be encouraged. Indonesia attached great importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers and strongly condemned attacks against them; such attacks should be swiftly investigated to ensure that the perpetrators were brought to justice. The Secretariat and Member States should also continue to enhance the safety and security of all peacekeepers, including by mitigating the impact of COVID-19. Given the proven role of women peacekeepers in increasing the effectiveness and overall performance of peacekeeping missions, collective efforts should be made to ensure their full, effective and meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations at all levels and in all positions, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2538 (2020). Indonesia took pride in being one of the largest contributors of women peacekeepers and was committed to increasing the representation of women among its peacekeeping personnel.

86. **Mr. Azizan** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was committed to enhancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Given the increasing participation of both States and private entities in space programmes, the role of COPUOS was more important than ever. Malaysia looked forward to working with the other members of COPUOS to implement the “Space2030” agenda. In 2017, Malaysia had adopted a national space policy and space exploration programme for the period until 2030. It hoped that, by 2030, the space sector would account for at least 0.3 per cent of gross domestic product and would have contributed to the creation of 500 knowledge-based jobs. In December 2019, in order to improve the governance of space activities, two agencies had been merged to form the Malaysian Space Agency. His Government also planned to enact a national law relating to space by the end of 2020.

87. UNRWA played an essential role in assisting Palestine refugees. Malaysia had consistently contributed in cash and in kind to the Government and people of Palestine, including through UNRWA. It had made regular financial contributions to the Agency since 1978, including most recently in 2020. Malaysia strongly condemned the flagrant violations committed by Israel, including the continued restrictions on the movement of UNRWA personnel and goods in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, restrictions that had undermined the Agency’s ability to fulfil its mandate.

His delegation called for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and rejected any unilateral action regarding the final status of Jerusalem.

88. Peacekeeping operations played a vital role in the maintenance of international peace and security, and Malaysia paid tribute to peacekeepers for the sacrifices they made. Malaysian peacekeepers were currently serving in five missions, and 30 personnel from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces were embedded in those contingents. His Government was also preparing to deploy 820 peacekeepers for rotation in UNIFIL. In addition, Malaysia continued to increase the representation of women among its peacekeeping personnel. His Government had supported the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure that operations were maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on best practices and lessons learned from the experience of the pandemic and prior health crises, and in coordination with WHO, Member States should thoroughly re-examine the tactical, technical and procedural aspects of peacekeeping operations in order to ensure the resilience of those operations in the face of future pandemics.

89. **Mr. Badubi** (Botswana) said that his country supported the inalienable right to self-determination of all peoples living under colonial rule in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Botswana stood in solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and was concerned about the deadlock in the decolonization process. It called on all parties to work towards achieving a peaceful, just and lasting solution, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. In that connection, his delegation called on the Secretary-General to expedite the process of appointing a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, so that the peace process could be resumed.

90. Botswana stood in solidarity with the people of Palestine. The ideal path to peace in the region was based on a two-State solution, with Israel and the State of Palestine living side by side in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and provisions of international law. The parties to the dispute should refrain from taking unilateral actions that undermined the peace process.

91. The liquidity crisis at UNRWA was putting the 5.6 million Palestine refugees who relied on it for health care, education, food assistance and other services at risk. Austerity measures would be devastating for refugees, in particular in the midst of the current public

health crisis. His delegation encouraged the international community to provide increased support and ensure predictable financing for the Agency.

92. His delegation welcomed the measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among peacekeeping personnel while ensuring operational continuity. It also welcomed the human resources and administrative measures that had been implemented as part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which should improve the performance of operations in terms of their mandate implementation. Special political missions continued to play an important role in fostering international peace and security, particularly in certain fragile regions of Africa, through early warning, mediation, preventive diplomacy, support for electoral processes, good offices and peacebuilding work.

93. The efforts of the Department of Global Communications to disseminate information to people around the world, in their preferred languages, were commendable and would help to ensure that no one was left behind. His delegation welcomed the Department's collaboration with WHO in combating the tide of misinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

94. **Ms. Maria de Jesus dos Reis Ferreira** (Angola) said that her Government welcomed the efforts of the Special Committee on decolonization to promote the implementation of the Declaration and accelerate the decolonization process in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Colonialism was incompatible with the mission of the United Nations, as international peace and security could only be achieved if the rights of all peoples were respected. The international community should not rest until there were no remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

95. Angola saluted the work of UNRWA and encouraged it to continue to provide health care, education and protection services to refugees in the Middle East, who continued to face tremendous difficulties on a daily basis. It supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Her Government encouraged Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) to engage in negotiations with a view to achieving a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. The Secretary-General should appoint a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara as soon as possible, with a view to the organization of a referendum as envisaged in the United Nations-African Union settlement plan.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

96. **Mr. Chaudhary** (Pakistan), replying to comments made by the representative of India, said that, in the Declaration on decolonization, the General Assembly had made it clear that all peoples under alien subjugation had a right to self-determination, and had called for immediate steps to be taken in respect of not only Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories but also other territories that had not yet attained independence. The denial of the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination was thus very relevant to the work of the Committee.

97. The Government of India had deployed 900,000 members of its security forces to Jammu and Kashmir, which had a population of only 11 million. It was attempting to eliminate the native Kashmiri population through its settler colonialism project and had adopted suppressive regulations on movement, landholding and the extraction of resources. The decades-long occupation of Jammu and Kashmir thus amounted to nothing less than colonization. A number of Security Council resolutions recognized that Jammu and Kashmir was a disputed territory and had stipulated that its fate should be decided by the will of the people, as expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. Those resolutions were binding and had been accepted by India and Pakistan. The United Nations therefore had not only the right but also an explicit obligation to discuss, intervene in and help resolve the dispute.

98. **Mr. Rogers** (United Kingdom), responding to comments made by the representatives of Brazil, Honduras and Uruguay, 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 those territories, or regarding the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The United Kingdom therefore remained committed to defending the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to self-determination, in order to enable them to determine freely their own political, social and economic future.

99. The United Kingdom continued to build a strong and constructive relationship with Argentina, which was in the best interests of both countries. It was unfortunate that the Government of Argentina had taken several measures in 2020 that had set back those relations. Such measures included the adoption of legislation increasing the penalties for illegal fishing, which could be used to target the fishing industry of the Falkland Islands. The

United Kingdom urged Argentina and its neighbours to refrain from any actions that could heighten tensions.

100. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the Malvinas Islands, 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 the national territory of Argentina and, being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, they were 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, 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. 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](#)).

101. The principle of self-determination, which the United Kingdom used as the basis for its refusal to resume negotiations on sovereignty, was inapplicable to the dispute in question, as affirmed by the General Assembly and the Special Committee. 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. In its resolution [31/49](#), the General Assembly had called upon the two parties to refrain from introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the Islands were going through the process recommended by the General Assembly. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate right to take whatever measures it considered necessary, in full respect for international law, with regard to the unilateral and unauthorized exploration and exploitation of natural resources in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were an integral part of the territory of Argentina.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.