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Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 October 2021, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Edbrooke (Vice-Chair) (Liechtenstein)

Contents

Agenda item 50: University for Peace (*continued*)*Agenda item 51: Assistance in mine action (*continued*)*Agenda item 52: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*)*Agenda item 53: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space
(*continued*)*Agenda item 54: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in
the Near East (*continued*)*Agenda item 55: Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the
Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories (*continued*)*Agenda item 56: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping
operations in all their aspects (*continued*)*Agenda item 57: Comprehensive review of special political missions (*continued*)*Agenda item 58: Questions relating to information (*continued*)*Agenda item 59: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted
under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)*Agenda item 60: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the
peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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Agenda item 61: 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 62: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)*

Agenda item 63: 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 Ms. González López (El Salvador), Mr. Edbrooke (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 50: University for Peace (*continued*) ([A/76/259](#))

Agenda item 51: Assistance in mine action (*continued*) ([A/76/283](#))

Agenda item 52: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*) ([A/76/46](#))

Agenda item 53: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) ([A/76/20](#))

Agenda item 54: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) ([A/76/13](#), [A/76/282](#), [A/76/289](#) and [A/76/306](#))

Agenda item 55: Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories (*continued*) ([A/76/304](#) and [A/76/333](#))

Agenda item 56: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

Agenda item 57: Comprehensive review of special political missions (*continued*) ([A/76/198](#))

Agenda item 58: Questions relating to information (*continued*) ([A/76/21](#) and [A/76/278](#))

Agenda item 59: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) ([A/76/23](#) and [A/76/63](#))

Agenda item 60: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) ([A/76/23](#))

Agenda item 61: 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*) ([A/76/23](#) and [A/76/68](#))

Agenda item 62: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) ([A/76/72](#))

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) ([A/76/23](#) and [A/76/68](#))

1. **Mr. Caballero Gennari** (Paraguay) said that, while the Committee's work to end colonialism was commendable, much remained to be done to ensure that the 17 non-self-governing territories achieved self-determination. As consolidating peace was essential to building a better world after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, support must be given to the University of Peace.

2. As a troop-contributing country, Paraguay attached great importance to the effective implementation of peacekeeping operations. It urged countries to continue to contribute troops to such missions and reiterated its commitment to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In Paraguay, troops and police continued to receive predeployment training at a dedicated training centre to ensure that all peacekeeping, security and humanitarian operations were conducted effectively.

3. Paraguay was endeavouring to increase the number of women troops, police officers and civilian actors involved in peacekeeping operations. Thus far, three female officers from the armed forces and one female police officer had been deployed on peacekeeping missions. His delegation supported efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda and remained committed to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

4. Paraguay reiterated its support for the legitimate sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. 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 and highlighted the willingness of the Government of Argentina to find a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute.

5. On the question of Western Sahara, Paraguay supported the political process under way and encouraged the parties involved to reach a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution in line with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

6. Greater use should be made of the Spanish language in United Nations activities to facilitate the effective participation of all Member States. By improving access to information about the work of the United Nations, multilingualism helped promote United Nations values.

7. **Mr. Pham Hai Anh** (Viet Nam) said that administering Powers should further strengthen their cooperation with the United Nations to expedite the

decolonization process. The United Nations should ensure that activities carried out by administering Powers did not negatively affect the legitimate interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, while also helping those Territories address new and emerging challenges.

8. As peacekeeping operations were a crucial tool for maintaining international peace and security, Viet Nam supported the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives and the reforms designed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping. The mandate of each mission needed to be clearly defined in light of the realities on the ground and the available resources. To that end, cooperation and triangular partnership projects should be encouraged in order to improve capacity-building and predeployment training, and missions should be provided with appropriate tools to enable peacekeepers to carry out their mandates effectively and protect themselves from threats. Viet Nam had deployed male and female peacekeepers on three tours at the Level-2 Field Hospital in Bentiu, South Sudan, under the aegis of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. In addition, under the Triangular Partnership Project, it hosted an international training centre in South-East Asia. The percentage of female peacekeepers from Viet Nam had increased from 16.5 per cent in 2020 to 20.6 per cent in 2021, well above the Secretary-General's target. In order to improve the participation of women in missions, an enabling environment should be fostered and additional policies should be put in place.

9. In view of the dire humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Viet Nam firmly supported the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and their inalienable right to self-determination. Viet Nam supported the two-State solution, allowing for the establishment of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, in peaceful coexistence alongside the State of Israel, with secure, internationally recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines and in accordance with international law, the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

10. In view of the critical work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the international community should heed the call by the Secretary-General to increase the Agency's funding and create additional posts to support the provision of education, health care and general assistance. The parties concerned, and the international community as a whole, should work to improve ease of access for humanitarian assistance.

11. Explosive remnants of war continued to affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of inhabitants of Viet Nam. While his delegation commended the action taken to address the multiple challenges caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war, which had serious and lasting humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences for affected populations, it was regrettable that mine action had not been accorded the level and scope of attention that it deserved. The area of land and the number of victims affected by mines were overwhelming, and yet resources remained limited. Clearance must be a nationally owned process, based on national priorities and needs, and should be complemented by assistance for victims, awareness raising and risk education at all levels. Focus should be placed on protecting and caring for communities, especially the most vulnerable, with the involvement of all stakeholders, including women. In April 2021, under the Vietnamese presidency, the Security Council had adopted a presidential statement on mine action, in which it had encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to enhance support for mine action, including by sharing best practices and providing technological and financial assistance to affected countries.

12. Further efforts should be made to prevent the possibility of an arms race or conflict in outer space and to encourage the exchange of information and increased cooperation on space science and technology, the safety of outer space activities and security in space. All countries, regardless of their development level, should be able to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

13. **Ms. Ameen** (Bahrain) said that her country believed in the importance of dialogue, coexistence and mutual acceptance as the foundations of peace, which Bahrain pursued as a strategic choice in all its international relations. With regard to the Palestinian issue, Bahrain strongly supported peaceful efforts to find a political solution that respected the rights of the Palestinian people to sovereignty over their land and resources, on the basis of the two-State solution, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

14. The rightful sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three Emirati islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa occupied by Iran must be restored. Moreover, Iran should engage with the earnest efforts of the United Arab Emirates to resolve the matter,

either through negotiations or through the International Court of Justice.

15. With regard to the Moroccan Sahara, Bahrain supported the serious efforts of the Moroccan Government to find a political solution to the dispute on the basis of its autonomy plan and the relevant Security Council resolutions, which endorsed a political process under the auspices of the Secretary-General. That process must be pursued in a manner that recognized the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Morocco.

16. Lastly, her delegation urged the international community to take all necessary steps to implement the Declaration on decolonization and the relevant United Nations resolutions to enable all peoples to live in safety and stability, which was key to achieving sustainable development.

17. Mr. Tun (Myanmar) said that, given the importance of the special political missions to the maintenance of international peace and security, especially following the rise in tensions engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic, his delegation welcomed the eighth annual interactive dialogue on special political missions, held in 2021.

18. Until the illegal military coup in February 2021, the elected civilian Government of Myanmar had cooperated closely with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the country, who had made a valuable contribution towards addressing the plight of the Rohingya people, condemning the ongoing atrocities committed by the military, and restoring democracy in Myanmar. The military junta had rejected all attempts to initiate dialogue and find a peaceful solution, however, and had refused to let the Special Envoy entry to the country.

19. Despite the commitment of the civilian Government of Myanmar to amplifying the free flow of reliable information and communications within and beyond the country's borders, the junta had banned satellite media, imposed rolling restrictions on the Internet, revoked media licences, pressured mobile carriers to intercept communications and placed dozens of journalists in detention, subjecting some to torture and forcing others into exile. Many areas of Myanmar had also experienced full Internet shutdowns aimed at containing news of atrocities. In addition to infringing the freedom of speech and information of the people of Myanmar, such measures had led to the closure of many businesses that relied on the information and communication technology sector, had prevented access to medical information during the COVID-19 pandemic and had further widened the digital divide. The civilian

Government nonetheless remained determined to put an end to the current catastrophe and to build back better.

20. **Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland was proud to support the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan through contributions of financial aid and personnel. His delegation paid tribute to those who had given their lives during such missions. It welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to maintaining clear and open dialogue with governments and communities in host States regarding the mandates, strategies and responsibilities of missions. For its part, Switzerland, as a co-chair of the working group on international humanitarian law and human rights of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya, sought to include non-State actors and civil society in its work in Libya. In addition, given the essential role played by women in peace processes, Switzerland supported dialogue in Lebanon between women from various political parties, including opposition movements. As a co-chair of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, it also sought to facilitate knowledge-sharing between all actors, including those from civil society.

21. The various aspects of crises and conflicts, such as the risks associated with climate change, needed to be integrated systematically into the mandates of peacekeeping missions, including in the context of transitions and withdrawal operations. Switzerland commended the approach taken by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in that regard and welcomed the inclusion of human rights components in the mandates of six special political missions and two peacekeeping missions.

22. Peacekeeping missions should have tailor-made mandates, adapted to the specific context of each country, that allowed them the flexibility required to react rapidly to emerging issues, included predefined milestones and provided for regular independent assessments. Switzerland called on all Member States to support the Peacebuilding Commission, as it played an essential consultative role in that regard.

23. His delegation commended the progress achieved by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), in particular the finalization of the "Space2030" Agenda, and welcomed the launch of working groups on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and on space resources.

24. **Ms. Alawadhi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the only way to resolve the Palestinian issue was through the two-State solution, establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian State along 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance

with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. All practices that violated Security Council resolutions and international law – notably the construction and expansion of settlements, the confiscation of property and the eviction of residents – in the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be halted. Palestinians must be permitted to exercise their religious convictions, and the legal status of East Jerusalem, with Jordan as its historical custodian, must be maintained.

25. UNRWA continued to play an important role in improving the lives of Palestine refugees. Between 2013 and 2021, the United Arab Emirates had provided more than \$883 million to fund essential services and development, including medical supplies and vaccines to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

26. Her delegation continued to support the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Moroccan Sahara, which the Security Council had described as serious and credible. The initiative was in line with the Charter and United Nations resolutions and preserved the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco. Her delegation endorsed the intensive efforts of Morocco to improve the living conditions of the population of Moroccan Sahara, in particular during the pandemic. It welcomed the recent round table meetings on the question of Moroccan Sahara and urged support for the political progress that had begun in 2007 under the exclusive auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy. The United Arab Emirates had opened a general consulate in the Moroccan Sahara as a reflection of its support for Moroccan sovereignty over the region.

27. Turning to an issue that did not relate to a Non-Self-Governing Territory per se but that did involve a violation of the fundamental principles set out in the Charter, she reiterated her country's right to sovereignty over Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which Iran was occupying in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter, and despite the many historical documents that attested to the rule of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands. Her Government would continue to call on Iran to return the islands and to resolve the matter peacefully, either through direct negotiations or by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice.

28. To consolidate its regional and international status regarding the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, the United Arab Emirates had signed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Artemis Accords and had concluded agreements and established strategic partnerships with national and international space agencies and the United Nations. The United Arab

Emirates had also launched the Hope probe in cooperation with international organizations and had formulated a national space strategy. It planned to conduct a mission to Venus and the asteroid belt to study the formation of the solar system.

29. Her delegation commended the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. The United Arab Emirates had achieved progress in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear applications and had established comprehensive infrastructure in accordance with international standards and best practices for nuclear safety and radiation protection.

30. **Mr. Savadogo** (Burkina Faso) 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. On the question of Western Sahara, his delegation supported the ongoing political process conducted under the auspices of the Secretary-General, aimed at achieving a realistic, pragmatic and lasting political solution to the regional dispute, based on compromise. In the light of the progress made at the two round tables involving Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Frente POLISARIO, his delegation encouraged all parties to maintain their commitment to that end and welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

31. His delegation commended the Department of Global Communications for enabling the work of the United Nations to continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic. While new forms of communication, such as social media, could help reach a wider audience, traditional media remained the main source of information for many populations, especially those in developing countries. With regard to multilingualism, it was important that the Department treat all official United Nations languages equally in order to guarantee cultural and linguistic diversity.

32. Peace operations continued to play a key role in restoring peace, security and stability in regions beset by conflict. Despite the terrorist threat facing the country, military, police and civilian personnel from Burkina Faso continued to serve at the heart of peace operations. Indeed, Burkina Faso was one of the main contributors of troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

33. Owing to the multifaceted effects of conflict, peacebuilding and sustaining peace were closely linked to the work done by peacekeepers. Burkina Faso

welcomed the support received from the Peacebuilding Commission and its technical and financial partners and hoped that such support would continue during the implementation of the country's new national economic and social development plan.

34. **Ms. Agaronova** (Russian Federation) said that the General Assembly should adopt a decision on the inclusion of Algeria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway and the United Arab Emirates in the Scientific Committee. Broad international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space should be developed on the basis of the universally recognized principles and norms of international space law, with COPUOS playing a key role. Her delegation supported the comprehensive discussion of the exploitation and use of outer space resources within the General Assembly and COPUOS. Forcing the approval of rules and standards for activities relating to space resources outside COPUOS could have serious consequences. Space resources, including the resources of the moon and other celestial bodies, were governed fully by the principles and norms 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. Her delegation welcomed the applications of Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia to join COPUOS as full members.

35. 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. Her delegation highly valued the efforts of UNRWA to provide education, health care and social services to millions of Palestine refugees. Unlike many international bodies working on humanitarian issues, UNRWA had been able to maintain a balanced and impartial approach. The Agency should continue its work until a just resolution to 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.

36. Peacekeeping must be carried out in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of peacekeeping, namely, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force, except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The primary objective of United Nations missions was the peaceful settlement of conflicts by political means. It was vital to respect the sovereignty and develop the capacities of host countries, which bore the primary responsibility for protecting civilians, addressing the causes of crises and ensuring post-conflict recovery. Decisions on peacekeeping issues would be effective only if they

were adopted by consensus by the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, including the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The provisions of the reports of that Committee should be followed by the Secretariat.

37. Further promotion of the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives of the Secretary-General should be carried out in accordance with recommendations and decisions made by Governments and approved by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, taking into account the reservations of countries with regard to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The continued implementation of the peacekeeping intelligence framework should be consistent with the parameters established in the report of the Special Committee (A/72/19). The same principles should apply to the use of new technologies. The United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization should develop cooperation in peacekeeping and take practical steps to involve the peacekeeping forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

38. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Department of Global Communications had succeeded both in maintaining quality and in increasing the audience reach of the Organization's online resources. The fundamental principles of the work of the United Nations – first and foremost, multilingualism – must be strictly upheld. Information technology was more important than ever to ensure access to reliable information, including about the pandemic, in all six official languages. Her delegation welcomed the willingness of the Department to cooperate with Member States in the implementation of educational projects, such as the initiative of the Commonwealth of Independent States to mark the anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War and the media campaign launched by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in support of the Charter.

39. Having insisted on the inclusion of the principles of the self-determination of peoples and equality of States in the Charter in 1945 and submitted to the General Assembly a draft declaration on decolonization on 23 September 1960, Russia remained a driving force in the decolonization process, actively supporting the efforts of the Special Committee on decolonization. Together with the delegations of South Africa and Viet Nam, her delegation had organized an event to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Declaration on decolonization, during which it had been highlighted that external governance was incompatible with full

development, which in turn was a fundamental prerequisite for strengthening peace. The decolonization process could not be considered complete until all the territories under the purview of the Special Committee, including Puerto Rico, had settled the issue of their status.

40. **Mr. Almunayekh** (Kuwait) said that, despite its essential contributions to the well-being of the Palestinian people and to stability and security in the region, UNRWA continued to be subject to political attacks. UNRWA required political support and sustainable funding in order to fulfil its mandate and confront such challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic. For its part, Kuwait had agreed to provide UNRWA with \$20 million for its programme activities in 2021–2022, and looked forward to the international ministerial conference on UNRWA convened by Jordan and Sweden and to be held in Brussels on 16 November 2021.

41. His delegation commended the efforts of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to shed light on the inhumane conditions in which the Palestinian people were living. The Palestinian people urgently required international protection against the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law perpetrated by Israel. In accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the international community should place pressure on Israel to cease all settlement activities in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, lift the blockade on Gaza and end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Golan. In order to ensure lasting, fair and comprehensive peace, the Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy all political rights, including the right to self-determination, through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and Israel should withdraw from all territories occupied since 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative.

42. As a party to all treaties on outer space, Kuwait hoped to begin the practical process of joining COPUOS during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, especially as it was preparing to launch its first satellite in 2022.

43. Special political missions played a vital role in conflict prevention and peacekeeping, often in very challenging circumstances. In that connection, Kuwait highlighted the support provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to the Government of Iraq in implementing Security Council resolution 2107

(2013), in particular the efforts made thus far to repatriate or return all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains and all Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, that had been seized by Iraq.

44. With regard to the question of the Sahara, Kuwait welcomed the participation of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario in the round table discussions held under the auspices of the Secretary-General in 2018 and 2019 with a view to achieving a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution. His delegation commended the progress made thus far and urged the new Personal Envoy to continue in that vein. Kuwait supported the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Sahara, underscored the importance of respecting the unity and sovereignty of Morocco, and reaffirmed the position taken in that regard by the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf at its 41st summit in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia, on 5 January 2021.

45. **Mr. Al Fazari** (Oman) said that the Palestinian question was one of the oldest items on the Organization's agenda; resolutions on the topic had not been implemented, and the occupying Power showed no concern for international law. His delegation supported international efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive solution, including the establishment of two States. The binding resolutions adopted by the Security Council would not lapse; they must be implemented, sooner or later. The international community to place pressure on Israel, the occupying Power, to curb its aggressive policies in the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Syrian Golan. Israel should return to the path of peace, which was the foundation of lasting and comprehensive peace and security in the Middle East. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories should continue observing and documenting Israeli practices and violations.

46. Developing countries stood to gain from international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space, given its applications for promoting development, monitoring climate change, combating desertification, managing disasters and establishing satellite communication systems. Knowledge and the knowledge economy, based on modern technologies and sciences, were central to the sustainable development plans of Oman, in particular the Oman Vision 2040. Practical steps should be taken to promote knowledge exchange and technology transfer among all States with regard to outer space science.

47. With regard to the Sahara, his delegation underscored the importance of reaching a realistic and

practicable political solution on the basis of compromise. It encouraged all parties to re-engage in dialogue to achieve an agreement on the basis of the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Sahara, which the Security Council had described as serious and credible.

48. **Mr. Roscoe** (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. 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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the United Kingdom had ensured that none of its Overseas Territories ran short of personal protective equipment, testing supplies or medical equipment, and had delivered vaccines to all Territories, including Pitcairn and Tristan da Cunha, which were among the most remote island communities on Earth.

49. 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.

50. In 2021, elections had been held in the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands and Saint Helena. On 4 November 2021, the Falkland Islands would hold a landmark election to form a ministerial government. The United Kingdom helped arrange independent monitoring for all such elections.

51. Following the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the Governments of the United Kingdom, Gibraltar and Spain had agreed a political framework on future arrangements in respect of Gibraltar that served the interests of all parties. Negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union had begun on 11 October 2021. The United Kingdom would fully support Gibraltar and its economy in any scenario; its long-standing commitment to the people of Gibraltar remained unchanged. 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.

52. 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. 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. 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.

53. 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 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. 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. 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.

54. In its new national space strategy, the United Kingdom recognized the vital importance of maintaining the sustainability of the space environment and protecting space systems from threats. To that end, the United Kingdom would continue to offer policy coherence across the United Nations system and provide

international leadership on space matters, in particular through its partnership with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs on space sustainability and its International Partnerships Programme, designed to help other countries attain the sustainable development goals through mechanisms such as the Space 2030 Agenda.

55. **Mr. Abusrewel** (Libya), highlighting the importance of the work of the Department of Global Communications in helping the United Nations overcome numerous challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and funding shortages, said that the Organization's efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully, promote sustainable development and a human rights culture, and combat climate change and terrorism must be communicated in all official languages in order to reach audiences around the world.

56. Although the United Nations had adopted numerous resolutions on the matter, the reality faced by the Palestinian people remained bitter. The two-State solution – and with it all prospects of a better life for the Palestinian people on their ancestral lands – would remain out of reach as long as the occupying Power continued to conduct brutal attacks against the Gaza Strip, uphold the long-standing isolation and fragmentation of the West Bank and implement a settlement policy designed to change the facts on the ground. His delegation endorsed the Palestinian people's decision to reject the occupying Power's repressive practices, and its right to establish an independent State with Al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital.

57. Mines and unexploded ordnances remained a national cause of concern in Libya. Incidents continued to occur in areas that had experienced bouts of conflict fuelled by external interference, which had forced thousands of civilians to flee their homes. His Government commended the work of the United Nations and its agencies to reduce the risks posed by mines and unexploded ordnances, and would continue to support United Nations programmes to train local demining teams. The 5+5 Joint Military Commission and the Libya Mine Action Centre, in cooperation with intergovernmental organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations, had played a commendable role in clearing mines and unexploded ordnances from the coastal road linking eastern and western Libya. Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross had done valuable work to raise awareness of the risks associated with explosive remnants of war.

58. The work of special political missions, the Organization's foremost tool with which to conduct

preventive diplomacy, must not contravene the fundamental principles of the United Nations. Special political missions should respect States' sovereignty and independent political decision-making, consulting with States as they carried out the mandate given to them by the Security Council.

59. Libya commended the United Nations Support Mission in Libya for facilitating the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, which had resulted in agreement on a political road map establishing an executive authority consisting of the Presidency Council and in the Government of National Unity.

60. **Monsignor Charters** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the work of the Scientific Committee to assess the impact of radiation fallout from nuclear accidents was essential when considering how best to deal with nuclear power, especially given the need to move beyond carbon-emitting energy sources. Nonetheless, the risks associated with nuclear accidents, nuclear proliferation and nuclear storage must be taken into account. Of particular value was the work of the Scientific Committee on evaluating the dose-response relationship in disease development at low doses.

61. Unless outer space was treated with the awe and wonder it deserved, humans ran the risk of developing an image of themselves as masters, consumers and exploiters of space, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. Given the rise in the number of satellites and in humanity's reliance on them in various areas, it was important to ensure that satellites were not exposed to risks caused by the presence of orbiting debris resulting from spent launching stages, satellites that had reached the end of their productive lives, or direct collisions between space objects.

62. With regard to the Palestinian question, Pope Francis had lamented the tragic loss of life following the eruption of violence in 2021, describing it as terrible and unacceptable and a sign that some people did not want to build the future but rather to destroy it. Until the longed-for negotiated political solution was reached, UNRWA would continue to provide a lifeline for the Palestinian people and enable them to realize their potential and contribute to the good of society, something that would have a positive impact on regional stability and mitigate the danger of violent extremism. UNRWA operated in a highly unstable regional context, however, which had been aggravated by the impact of the recent violence on infrastructure, rising unemployment and the socioeconomic crisis in Lebanon. While urging the international community to support UNRWA through timely financial contributions, the Holy See also appealed to all relevant actors to

resume negotiations so that Israelis and Palestinians could find a way to forgiveness, justice and peaceful coexistence.

63. As to peacekeeping missions, it was important to ensure that civilians continued to be protected during transitions and drawdown processes. Greater and more respectful engagement and collaboration with local and national authorities and with civil society groups, including religious actors and faith-based organizations, must be part of the planning and implementation process for such missions. Peacekeeping operations should also address associated environmental challenges, especially given the potential of climate change to exacerbate poverty and inequality, undermine regional stability, increase food and resource scarcity and drive population displacement and migration. He paid tribute to all peacekeepers, in particular those who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace.

64. **Mr. Pary Rodríguez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that all administering Powers should initiate a genuine process of decolonization for all 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories without delay. Global cooperation and solidarity should be stepped up with a view to implementing the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and helping the peoples of those Territories overcome sustainable development challenges. In that connection, his delegation supported the efforts of the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and full independence from United States colonialism, and urged the United States of America to start the relevant processes without delay.

65. With regard to Western Sahara, his delegation hoped that the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would help achieve a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, in line with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Plurinational State of Bolivia urged all parties to respect the ceasefire and to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General, without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to consolidating the right of the Sahrawi people to decide their own future.

66. The Plurinational State of Bolivia reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which formed part of the national territory of Argentina. The parties should return to negotiations in good faith, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in order to achieve a fair, peaceful

and definitive solution that would bring an end to the current colonial situation.

67. As the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people continued to worsen, and as the excesses of the administering Power continued to grow exponentially, the historical inequality between the two sides had become glaring. Israel, the colonizing and occupying Power, continued to use its military might to occupy the Palestinian territory. The unilateral decision of the United States of America to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the sovereignty of Israel over the Syrian Golan was regrettable and represented a violation of the Charter, international law and Security Council resolutions. The Plurinational State of Bolivia firmly supported all international efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution that would allow both peoples to live within recognized and secure borders. The only viable long-term solution was the two-State solution, which consisted of establishing an independent, sovereign Palestinian State based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

68. As part of humanity's heritage, outer space should be used fairly and without discrimination for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind. All attempts to militarize outer space should be rejected. The Plurinational State of Bolivia therefore supported the creation of an international mechanism or legally binding agreement to control the use of outer space and prevent an arms race.

69. At a time when all States were seeking efficient solutions to facilitate their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was essential that they had universal access to information that could be used to help build resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies. Multilingualism was central to multilateral communication and should therefore be strengthened.

70. **Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) said that her 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. Her 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.

71. 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.

72. 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. Her delegation called for the adoption of measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and encouraged Member States to ratify the relevant international instruments.

73. Since ratifying the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the Ottawa Convention), Colombia had endeavoured, with support from the international community, to destroy all existing stockpiles of mines and ban their use by the Armed Forces. National operational capacity for mine clearance had been strengthened: two military organizations and five civilian organizations were now responsible for humanitarian mine clearance in Colombia. Thus far, 456 municipalities had been cleared of anti-personnel mines, equivalent to 77 per cent of the entire territory of Colombia. Nonetheless, anti-personnel mines continued to be used indiscriminately by illegal armed groups, which posed a threat to communities and sustainable development.

74. Special political missions were an important instrument for preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, and supporting political transitions. Her delegation reaffirmed its commitment to peacebuilding and acknowledged the support provided through the Peacebuilding Fund. The decision to renew the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, at the request of his Government, illustrated the support of the international community, and the Security Council in particular, for building peace in Colombia. 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, her Government would continue to allocate all available resources for that purpose.

75. Given the challenges faced by peacekeeping operations in implementing their mandates, her delegation called for greater cooperation between all agencies involved in the execution of such operations. It also encouraged Member States to continue to

contribute to peacekeeping operations and expressed support for 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.

76. Her delegation supported the efforts of the Department of Global Communications to promote the use of Spanish and the other official languages in the work of the United Nations. Multilingualism was an enabler of multilateral diplomacy and had an important role to play in promoting the values and activities of the United Nations.

77. **Mr. Mimouni** (Algeria) said that, as the international community entered the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it must recommit to ending the plight of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. To achieve the decolonization of Western Sahara, the last remaining colony in Africa, the international community needed to make a genuine contribution to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provided for the right of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The issue at hand was not one of regional conflict or the restoration of territorial integrity, much less of political bargaining. Western Sahara was a Non-Self-Governing Territory that had been recognized as such by the United Nations. Any solution would require a referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, as had been legally acknowledged in the Settlement Plan accepted by both Morocco and Frente POLISARIO and as had been reaffirmed by the European Court of Justice in its judgement issued on 29 September 2021.

78. It was regrettable that little progress had been made towards holding a free referendum and that the various calls for the resumption of direct negotiations had gone unanswered. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Secretary-General of the United Nations had expressed concern regarding the deadlock in the political process and the resumption of hostilities. The two parties to the conflict should deescalate the situation and resume the political process in good faith. The international community should take a firm stand in the face of the multiple human rights violations suffered by the people of Western Sahara.

79. His delegation paid tribute to the humanitarian agencies that continued to support the Sahrawi residents in Algeria. His country would continue to work with all humanitarian partners on the ground to ensure the welfare of those refugees until they were able to return

to their homeland. The best way of improving their situation, however, was to address the root causes of the conflict in Western Sahara. His delegation hoped that the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would lead to a resumption of the settlement process. Algeria endorsed the Secretary-General's appeal for members of the Security Council, the friends of Western Sahara and other stakeholders to encourage Morocco and Frente POLISARIO to continue to participate in the political process in good faith and without preconditions. Only through direct dialogue, conducted in a spirit of respect and genuine engagement, could lasting peace be built in the region. For its part, Algeria, as a neighbouring country and an official observer of the peace process, would spare no effort to help put an end to the conflict, which could be achieved only by allowing the people of Western Sahara to freely exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

80. **Mr. Odida** (Uganda) said that the international community had an obligation to provide predictable, sustained and uninterrupted support for UNRWA, which made an essential contribution towards the realization of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. Uganda continued to support the Palestinian people in their struggle to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination, freedom and independence, reiterating that the two-State solution remained the only viable option for achieving long-standing peace and a resolution to the conflict.

81. His delegation paid tribute to all peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the line of duty, welcomed the progress made in implementing the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives and the swift measures taken to ensure that peacekeeping personnel were able to conduct their work in safe and secure conditions. As a troop-contributing country, Uganda recognized the vital role of the United Nations in coordinating joint peacekeeping activities, in particular in Africa, where such activities complemented the efforts of the African Union. Given the growing strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security, as well as the prominent role of Africa in United Nations peacekeeping, efforts should be stepped up, and financial and material commitments increased, in order to help overcome the peacekeeping challenges in the African region.

82. While welcoming efforts to improve the expertise, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of special political missions, in addition to their levels of geographical and gender representation and youth involvement, his delegation urged Member States to fulfil their commitments with regard to funding and backstopping arrangements for such missions.

83. His delegation welcomed the actions taken by the Department of Global Communications to disseminate fact-based and reliable information, bridge the digital divide, and establish crisis communication mechanisms and a system-wide communications process for disseminating positive and factual information on the work of the United Nations.

84. It was disheartening that the status of the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories had yet to be resolved. In particular, it was urgent to reach a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. The Committee should fulfil its responsibility in that regard and actively support the efforts of the African Union to press for a referendum on self-determination. A visiting mission to Western Sahara should be conducted as soon as possible, as such missions were a key part of conflict resolution. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and called on all parties to resume direct negotiations without delay.

85. **Mr. Al-barati** (Yemen) said that, although his country had eliminated all its stockpiles of mines since acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), Houthi militias, supported by the Iranian regime, had planted more than 2 million mines throughout Yemen, leading to thousands of deaths and injuries. The random dispersal of those mines made their clearance all the more difficult. The international community should press the Houthi militias and the Iranian regime to comply with international law and resolutions, cease planting mines and explosive devices and provide the Yemeni Government with maps of the locations of all mines planted thus far. It would also be useful for the international community to provide demining training and equipment to the Yemeni Government.

86. Stability in the Middle East, comprehensive peace with Israel and the normalization of relations would remain elusive until a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question was found, the occupation of the Palestinian and Arab lands was brought to an end and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were guaranteed. Those rights included the right to self-determination, the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and to receive compensation and a just settlement, in line with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and the right to establish an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with internationally recognized resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

87. His Government condemned Israeli settlement activities and called on the Security Council to implement resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which reaffirmed that such activities were a flagrant violation of international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of peace. The occupying Power should immediately cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in Jerusalem. His delegation encouraged donor States to provide further support to UNRWA, which, despite the challenging economic and financial situation, had a positive impact on the lives of Palestinian refugees.

88. His Government condemned all Israeli efforts to alter the legal status, demographics and environment of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and to increase its control over the area. Such efforts were in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In line with the peace process and relevant international resolutions, his Government supported the Syrian claim over the whole of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan within the 4 June 1967 borders.

89. His delegation commended the efforts of Morocco to agree on a just and lasting solution to the question of the Sahara. It welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to secure the resumption of negotiations. Lastly, his delegation supported all peaceful measures taken by the United Arab Emirates to restore its rightful sovereignty over the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

90. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom), replying to the comments made by the representatives of Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia 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 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. Consequently, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders so wished.

91. **Mr. Assadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), said that, notwithstanding the false and baseless comments made by the representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, his country reiterated its sovereignty over the Iranian islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf. Measures taken by Iranian officials in that regard were intended to preserve his

country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The unfounded claim over the islands made by the United Arab Emirates – a claim that his Government rejected – constituted flagrant interference in the domestic affairs of Iran, in violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

92. His Government had always pursued a policy of friendship and good neighbourliness towards all neighbouring countries. It remained ready to engage in bilateral talks with the United Arab Emirates with a view to continuing to strengthen bilateral relations and removing any misunderstandings. However, the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its sovereignty over the three islands were non-negotiable.

93. **Mr. Laassel** (Morocco) said that the representative of Algeria had underscored the need to address the root causes of the dispute regarding the Moroccan Sahara. However, Algeria was itself the sole root cause of the dispute. It could not deceive the international community into thinking that it was merely a neighbouring country; it was the main driver behind the continuation of the conflict, which amounted to a bilateral dispute between it and Morocco. Algeria had created the Polisario, a despotic and unscrupulous armed separatist group with no respect for international law. It hosted the Polisario and provided it with weapons worth some \$10 billion a year taken from its arms budget, which was among the highest in the world. It offered the Polisario diplomatic support, including so-called embassies and diplomatic passports, and advocated for its recognition by other Member States. Algeria poured millions of dollars into anti-Morocco events, including those held at Boumerdès University each year, whose purpose was to recruit ex-convicts and add them to the payroll. Those recruits took advantage of the culture of respect for human rights that prevailed in the southern provinces in order to undermine public order and commit horrific crimes.

94. By responding to the various proposals by the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoys and Morocco, and by officially rejecting the framework agreement proposed by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General at the time, James Baker, Algeria had always acted as a party to the dispute. In a letter dated 19 November 1975 from the representative of Algeria to the Secretary-General ([A/10373-S/11881](#)), it had even described itself as one of the “parties concerned and interested” in the matter.

95. The idea of holding a self-determination referendum in the Moroccan Sahara was dead and buried, as had been recognized in a report of the

Secretary-General ([S/2000/131](#)) and in numerous resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 2002. The representative of Algeria had referred to the most recent report of the Secretary-General ([S/2021/843](#)); he should be mindful of the allegations mentioned in paragraph 78 thereof regarding the misappropriation of aid intended for refugees on Algerian territory and the extrajudicial executions of two Sahrawi refugees by the Algerian security forces.

96. **Mr. Gutiérrez Segú Berdullas** (Spain), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that his country hoped that the forthcoming agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union regarding Gibraltar would allow for the creation of a zone of shared prosperity encompassing Gibraltar, Campo de Gibraltar and the bay of Algeciras. The various bilateral agreements on Gibraltar signed between Spain and the United Kingdom within the context of the latter's withdrawal from the European Union boded well and would serve as an excellent precedent. Those agreements had been negotiated bilaterally between Spain and the United Kingdom, regardless of the composition of the national delegations involved. Representatives of the regional government of Andalusia and of the municipal authorities of Campo de Gibraltar had been part of the Spanish delegation at various points and in various configurations.

97. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that his delegation reiterated the statements made by the President of Argentina to the General Assembly on 21 September 2021 ([A/76/PV.4](#)) and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina to the Special Committee on decolonization on 24 June 2021 ([A/AC.109/2021/SR.6](#)). 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 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 the resolution adopted on 24 June 2021.

98. The principle of self-determination of peoples, 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 in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee. 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.

99. The 2013 vote held 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, 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 citizens 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 there did not exist in the Malvinas a people within the meaning of international law. 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. Lastly, 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.

100. **Ms. AlMatrooshi** (United Arab Emirates), replying to the comments made by the representative of Iran, said that her delegation did not seek confrontation; but a peaceful solution would require good will. Her Government would continue to call on Iran to respond positively to its invitation to work towards a peaceful settlement of the issue of the three Emirati islands occupied by Iran, through either direct negotiation or recourse to the International Court of Justice. Her delegation categorically rejected the baseless claim of Iran over the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

101. **Mr. Mimouni** (Algeria) said that his delegation resolutely rejected the deceptive Moroccan narrative aimed at distorting the legal and political realities of the conflict in Western Sahara and at whitewashing the horrors of the colonial practices carried out by Morocco

in that Non-Self-Governing Territory. In addition to demonstrating blatant contempt for the rules of international law, that narrative showed a shameful disregard for the sovereign right of each Member State to express its position and beliefs respectfully. In so doing, it demeaned the ideals set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

102. Notwithstanding the one-sided and distorted view put forward by the representative of Morocco, the question of Western Sahara had been added to the agenda of the General Assembly in 1963 as an issue of decolonization within the scope of the Declaration. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions and the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 16 October 1975, the decolonization of Western Sahara should be completed by allowing its people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. In its judgment of 29 September 2021, the European Court of Justice had taken the same view.

103. The far-fetched and hollow rhetoric used by the Moroccan authorities in an attempt to paint Algeria as the protagonist of a so-called regional conflict was merely a smokescreen to conceal the cruel colonial rule and expansionist appetite of Morocco and to evade responsibility for creating and perpetuating a colonial situation that had paved the way for torture, killings and the plundering of natural resources. As demonstrated in numerous United Nations resolutions and reports, the conflict in Western Sahara was between the Kingdom of Morocco and Frente POLISARIO, as the elected representative of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, a fellow member State of the African Union. Such devious attempts to interpret United Nations resolutions in a one-sided manner were futile. Even the former King of Morocco had acknowledged that the conflict did not involve Algeria, and had received a delegation of the leaders from Frente POLISARIO.

104. At its session in 1972, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity had adopted a resolution deploring the slowness with which Spain was proceeding with the decolonization of Western Sahara and urging Spain to establish an atmosphere of freedom and democracy in which the people of that Territory could exercise their right to self-determination and independence as soon as possible in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Morocco had hosted that session in Rabat, in the presence of the King of Morocco, and had endorsed that resolution. And yet, in 1975, on the eve of the announcement that a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara would be held, Morocco had demonstrated its predatory ambitions by invading the territory of Western Sahara.

105. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom), replying to the comments made by the representatives of Argentina and Spain, said that reference had been made to various resolutions and regional statements of support for sovereignty negotiations, but none of those modified or diluted the obligation of nations to respect the legally binding principle of self-determination. The 2013 referendum had sent a clear message that the people of the Falkland Islands did not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes.

106. 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.

107. **Mr. Assadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa had been an integral part of Iran for thousands of years and would remain so. By raising an unfounded claim irrelevant to the work of the Committee, the delegation of the United Arab Emirates was abusing the Committee's processes in order to advance its political interests in the Persian Gulf region. No matter how many times that claim was repeated, Iran would reject it categorically.

108. His Government stood ready to continue its bilateral talks with the United Arab Emirates with a view to removing any misunderstandings between the two countries. His delegation called on the United Arab Emirates to observe the principle of good neighbourliness, respect international law and avoid policies and practices that undermined peace and security in the Persian Gulf region.

109. **Mr. Laassel** (Morocco) said that the representative of Algeria sought to use Morocco as a foil to distract attention from the repression of peaceful demonstrations in the streets of Algiers. When the resolution of the Organization of African Unity had been adopted, in 1972, the Moroccan Sahara had been under Spanish occupation.

110. The United Nations had not once issued a document in which it had referred to Morocco as a colonizing country. Algeria, meanwhile, was colonizing its own people, something that drove it to interfere in matters which did not concern it. Algeria had no place talking about issues of human rights given its history of repression throughout its own territory.

111. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that the representative of the United Kingdom had implied that

the resolutions of the General Assembly were non-binding. However, in its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, the International Court of Justice had concluded decisively that the General Assembly played a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the obligations of administering Powers and ensuring that they had given sufficient consideration to the modalities required to ensure the completion of the decolonization, as well as in determining in which cases, and how, referendums on self-determination should be held.

112. In addition, the Court had clearly underscored the normative value of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the principles set out therein, including the principle of territorial integrity, the nature of which as a customary norm had been confirmed through State practice and *opinio juris*. The Court had recalled that self-determination was not applicable to populations that did not constitute peoples with that right.

113. In line with the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States had a responsibility to resolve disputes peacefully and negotiate in good faith. The resumption of negotiations was not dependent on the desire of the population implanted on the islands by the administering Power, but rather was an obligation under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. His delegation supported the mandate of the Special Committee on decolonization which, after listening to all points of view, considering the purposes and principles of the Charter, the resolutions of the General Assembly and the interests of the population of the Islands, reached the conclusion, year after year, that the only way to resolve the sovereignty dispute and put an end to the colonial situation of the Malvinas Islands was through the resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom.

114. **Mr. Gutiérrez Segú Berdullas** (Spain), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that, 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.

115. The General Assembly had clearly denied the existence of an alleged right to self-determination of the population 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. The interests of the population on both sides of the fence should be taken into account; as two amicable European parliamentary monarchies, Spain and the United Kingdom shared the same profound democratic convictions. In addition, the regions of Spain enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and political and administrative decentralization.

116. **Mr. Mimouni** (Algeria) said that, like all bullies, the Moroccan delegation believed it could subdue principled positions by force. As history proved, however, such strategies were doomed to fail. The support of Algeria for the right to self-determination of all peoples under colonial rule was part of its culture and heritage, rooted in a democratic principle that had universal validity. In providing such support, Algeria did not seek to advance a narrow agenda and would not bow to threats. The fickleness and inconsistency of the approach taken by Morocco to the peace process was deplorable and had directly led to the current situation.

117. The highest authorities of the European Commission and the World Food Programme had refuted the slanderous allegations concerning the misappropriation of aid by Algeria and humanitarian workers in Western Sahara. Such allegations showed that Morocco had adopted a policy of fabrication. His delegation deplored the attempts by the Moroccan Government to present itself as a model of political virtue when it failed to honour its obligations under international law and continued to pursue a policy of threat and oppression in Western Sahara, thereby impeding the people of Western Sahara from exercising their right to self-determination and preventing the advent of peace in the region.

118. Morocco had no moral right to preach to other States, especially given its expansionist policy based on a system of total repression, torture and crimes, its lack of respect for international law and its lack of consideration for the international community. In refusing to allow non-governmental organizations, United Nations human rights monitoring mechanisms, parliamentarians or journalists to visit the occupied Territory, Morocco clearly feared that its serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances and executions, would become visible. The Moroccan authorities should put an end to that short-sighted strategy, which would lead only to lingering instability in the region. They should engage in good faith in the United Nations process with a view to reaching a just and lasting political solution that would provide for the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.