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Summary record of the 12th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 27 October 2021, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Nayan (Vice-Chair) (Philippines)
later: Mr. Prvý (Vice-Chair) (Slovakia)
later: Mr. Nayan (Vice-Chair) (Philippines)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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In the absence of Ms. González López (El Salvador), Mr. Nayan (Philippines), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

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1. **Mr. Kim Nam Hyok** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his country had worked to advance peaceful space development, capitalizing on space science and technology in order to promote economic development and improve living standards. At the same time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was adhering to its obligations under international law on the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. His delegation supported the "Space2030" Agenda and would actively join international efforts towards its implementation. The right of sovereign States to develop and use outer space was universal and legitimate, and could be exercised equally, regardless of territorial size or strength. Nonetheless, the United States of America had committed the hostile act of violating that right by engineering the adoption of Security Council resolutions to impose sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for its satellite launch. Worse still, the United States had prevented his country from engaging in international exchanges and cooperation in the field of outer space, thereby hindering its sustainable development, in flagrant violation of international law. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would not, however, be deterred from endeavouring to become an advanced spacefaring nation.

2. The expansionist policy of Israel in the occupied Arab territories continued to violate the democratic freedom and rights of the Palestinian people. The massacre of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip constituted a war crime and a crime against humanity. The failure to address the question of Palestine was a result of the bias and double standards shown by the United States. The international community should respond by upholding justice and putting an end to such evil practices. Israel must stop all military actions that infringed on the right to survival of the Palestinian people and withdraw from the occupied Arab territories without delay. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would continue to support the Palestinian people in its endeavour to end the Israeli occupation of its territory and establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

3. United Nations peacekeeping operations should be firmly grounded in the principles of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. In the event that a peacekeeping operation needed to be deployed, the Security Council should make its final decision based on discussions and the consent of the parties involved. Peacekeeping operations must be reviewed periodically and terminated in cases where they were not fulfilling their mandates on schedule. Furthermore, it was important not to overlook actions

that misused the name of the United Nations in pursuit of sinister political and military interests. The United Nations Command in south Korea had been illegally established by the United States and had nothing to do with the United Nations in any aspect of its administration and budget. Notwithstanding General Assembly resolution 3390 (XXX) on the dissolution of the United Nations Command, the United States insisted on keeping it in place with a view to legitimizing and perpetuating its occupation of south Korea and meeting its political and military goals in the Asia-Pacific region. Immediate measures should therefore be taken to dismantle the United Nations Command in south Korea.

4. Information activities, too, should be based on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference. It was deeply alarming that some countries were abusing public information for sinister political purposes such as regime change and the incitement of distrust among nations and ethnic groups. Information activities should be directed towards addressing global challenges, such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the impacts of natural disasters. Given the current prevalence of misinformation and disinformation, the Department of Global Communications must provide objective and factual information on international issues, including sustainable development. The Organization's publications and video materials should not contain any distorted or misleading information on the realities of Member States.

5. **Ms. Badjie** (Gambia) said that United Nations peacekeeping operations remained an indispensable tool for peace and stability in many conflict-affected countries around the world. Given the challenging circumstances of the pandemic together with financial and logistical bottlenecks, the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure the safety and effective conduct of peacekeeping missions were commendable.

6. Strengthened efforts were needed to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations, notably by deploying highly trained officers with adequate resources and a thorough understanding of mission mandates. The Gambia continued to support the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which sought to refocus peacekeeping with realistic expectations and clearly identified priorities. It also recognized the important contribution of the Secretary-General's light coordination mechanism, which was facilitating strong partnerships, training and capacity-building for troop-contributing countries in the various priority areas.

7. The Gambia attached great importance to the women, peace and security agenda, which could be fully

realized only through the deployment of female uniformed personnel to peacekeeping missions. The security and protection provided by female peacekeepers helped to ensure positive outcomes for the women and girls who were adversely affected by the conflicts in various missions. At the national level, her country had worked to incorporate a gender perspective into its military and police deployments to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Gambia had also determined national indicators and targets with a view to increasing its numbers of well-trained women officers at all levels of assignment.

8. Personnel from the Gambia had been among the first to respond to the conflict in Darfur, first through the African Union Mission in the Sudan and then through the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The ongoing partnership between the United Nations and the African Union showed that partnerships with regional organizations had the potential to forge prevention strategies and enhance the response to emergency situations.

9. Her delegation acknowledged the efforts undertaken by Morocco to resolve the dispute in its Sahara region, supported the ongoing political process under the auspices of the Secretary-General, and welcomed the appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, which it hoped would spur dialogue towards a peaceful, mutually acceptable, realistic and sustainable political solution based on compromise. Responsibility for a successful resolution rested as much with neighbouring countries as with Morocco. A third round table should therefore be held, and all stakeholders should remain engaged and constructive throughout the political process.

10. The Gambia fully supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of Morocco over all its territories, including the Moroccan Sahara. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was a viable solution to the question of the Sahara, serving as a serious and realistic compromise that could resolve the regional dispute and contribute to the security and stability of the Sahel region. The local population had benefited from the Moroccan socioeconomic development initiative and from its vaccination campaign in the Sahara region. Those efforts demonstrated a strong political commitment to resolving the dispute in the Sahara and to unite the Moroccan populations.

11. **Ms. Haji Ariffin** (Brunei Darussalam) said that her delegation was concerned at the worsening situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the impact of COVID-19 on Palestinian rights. The health,

economic and social challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had also been exacerbated by the repeated acts of violence and oppression undertaken by the occupying Power. It was important to facilitate access to medical treatment for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in light of the pandemic, and to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Palestinians in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem and Gaza. Brunei Darussalam fully supported international efforts towards comprehensive and lasting peace and security in the Middle East, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant resolutions. The international community must remain committed to the two-State solution, including the establishment of an independent State of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

12. Despite persistent challenges, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had continued to provide health care, food and education for millions of Palestine refugees. In view of its significant financial difficulties, particularly due to the increase in its operational costs during the pandemic, UNRWA must be provided with adequate resources.

13. In addition to inflicting suffering on the Palestinian people, foreign occupation had prevented them from fulfilling their potential or contributing to development at the global level. Her Government supported efforts to grant Palestine full membership of the United Nations, something that would ensure its inclusion in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

14. **Ms. Sulimani** (Sierra Leone) said that colonialism should have no place in the twenty-first century, and fresh approaches were required to advance the decolonization agenda. The existing plan of action should be updated, with clear benchmarks to guide the Committee in its work. The situations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be handled on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the relevant resolutions. The Committee should collaborate more closely with the administering Powers, encouraging them to continue catering for the development needs and well-being of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular by making the COVID-19 vaccine available to all eligible inhabitants. The administering Powers should also submit road maps to the United Nations charting the way to self-determination. Specialized agencies and other regional organizations also had a valuable role to play in accelerating socioeconomic progress in the Territories. It was imperative to review conditions relating to the well-being of the inhabitants,

especially given the threats posed by the pandemic and climate-related issues.

15. Sierra Leone reiterated its unwavering support for the ongoing political process in Western Sahara under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his new Personal Envoy, which aimed to reach a mutually acceptable and durable solution to the regional dispute. Her delegation welcomed the agreements reached at the previous two round tables held among the parties concerned, namely Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario, and looked forward to the third round table. The relevant Security Council resolutions adopted since 2007 must be leveraged to explore all potential avenues for resolving the outstanding issues. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was commendable in its aim to promote realism and compromise in order to reach a lasting solution. Morocco was also working to address the health and development needs of the inhabitants of Western Sahara, notably by making COVID-19 vaccines available to all eligible individuals.

16. With regard to the question of Palestine, Sierra Leone supported a two-State solution through which Palestinians and Israelis could live side by side in peace. Humanitarian assistance was of vital importance in maintaining a stable and peaceful environment. As UNRWA continued to operate in an extremely volatile region, sufficient predictable and sustained support was needed in order to work towards a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

17. The COVID-19 pandemic had threatened not only the health and well-being of civilians and military personnel, but also the ability of United Nations peacekeeping missions to respond to the pandemic while delivering their mandates. Consequently, it was imperative for Member States to offer their concerted support for the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and, in particular, the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Lastly, her delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and the objectives which he had set out in April 2020 in response to the pandemic.

18. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that his Government supported the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives aimed at strengthening the peacekeeping system. It was important to continue with reforms to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, which were one of the most important mechanisms at the Organization's disposal. Such endeavours should be consistent with the Secretary-General's vision for reform and the recommendations of the Special

Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. They should evince respect for the sovereignty of host States and should be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant legal framework. Peacekeeping forces should be impartial and should use force only in self-defence or to protect civilians, and only within the context of the mandate. Perpetrators of abuses must be held accountable in order to protect host communities and uphold the reputation of peace operations.

19. Peacekeepers should be trained to adapt to developments on the ground, bearing in mind the specificities of each mission and region. Care should be taken to ensure that missions did not constitute a conflict of interest for contributing States, host States, the States that provided peacekeeping funds, or the United Nations. Constructive engagement with host communities should be pursued, including training programmes and small development projects.

20. Since 2007, the Sudan had hosted UNAMID. The situation in Darfur had changed dramatically in the intervening years, as evidenced by the decision to end UNAMID in 2020. The United Nations sanctions against the Sudan, which had initially been imposed under considerably different circumstances, should therefore be lifted.

21. The Sudan had also hosted the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) since 2011. His Government had many concerns about UNISFA and was communicating those concerns to the relevant Secretariat departments.

22. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Operational Support played a commendable role in upholding transparency and accountability in special political missions, enhancing their efficiency and ensuring equitable geographic representation and the participation of women and youth. The fact that such missions had continued despite the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic was a testament to their flexibility and resilience.

23. It was important to improve the efficiency of special political missions in order to enable them to confront complex challenges; strengthen their cooperation with regional organizations and draw inspiration from those organizations' success stories; respect the national sovereignty of States and the principles of national ownership and consent of the State concerned; and provide them with financial and human resources, with due regard for equitable geographic representation among leaders and members.

24. It was important for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to be adequately funded so that it could help the Sudan to successfully navigate its transitional period. For its part, following the success of its revolution and the establishment of peace throughout the country, the Sudan was preparing to contribute forces to peacekeeping operations.

25. Stability in the Middle East hinged on the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. His delegation called for support to continue to be extended to UNRWA.

26. Turning to questions relating to information, his delegation called for the Verified campaign to be expanded to address hate speech and the incitement of civil strife. Legal measures and an international agreement should be put in place with a view to striking a balance between safeguarding freedom of expression and preventing the harm done by character assassination.

27. **Mr. Mbingo** (Eswatini) said that Eswatini remained unwavering in its support for the Secretary-General's determination to achieve a realistic, pragmatic and sustainable political solution, based on compromise, to the regional dispute over Western Sahara. The autonomy initiative was the only serious and credible political solution in that regard. The commitment of Morocco to relaunch the political process based on Security Council resolution [2548 \(2020\)](#), to adhere to the ceasefire and to fully cooperate with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was commendable, particularly in the current context of the pandemic. The holding of the round tables between the parties was a positive step towards a political solution, which would also enhance cooperation between members of the Maghreb Arab Union and contribute to stability and security in the Sahel region. His delegation was confident that the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would continue to build on the progress of those round tables, and encouraged all parties to engage in a spirit of realism and compromise throughout that process.

28. The high turnout of voters in the legislative, regional and local elections in the southern provinces was an expression of the commitment among the local population to the democratic process and to their Moroccan identity. Morocco had made considerable progress in implementing the new development model for the Moroccan Sahara, which demonstrated its commitment to the well-being of all its inhabitants. In recognition of that commitment, a growing number of

consulates general had been opened in Laayoune and Dakhla, which would help to boost increased cooperation and create trade opportunities. The pandemic response of Morocco, and particularly its vaccination campaign in the Moroccan Sahara, had also been impressive.

29. **Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that outer space was the common heritage of all humanity and should be explored and used only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all. All States should be able to explore and use outer space on an equal basis and the principle of non-appropriation must be respected. Non-discriminatory cooperation in outer space activities should be promoted and the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the peaceful activities of States in outer space must be observed.

30. The role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation was crucial and depended on the cooperation of all Member States. The Scientific Committee should be able to benefit from the contributions and knowledge of all countries, including through their participation in its work. His delegation therefore welcomed the advice of the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly that, in its opinion, all four observer States in the work of the Scientific Committee, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, compared favourably against the framework of objective criteria for membership. His delegation hoped that the four observers would be admitted as full members of the Scientific Committee, to be represented by their most qualified scientists.

31. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) played an admirable role in assisting countries affected by mines and the explosive remnants of war. His country faced illegal and harmful unilateral coercive measures that severely impeded its efforts to conduct successful mine action operations and hindered its access to mine-clearing materials, equipment, technology and financial resources. Such measures must cease in order for his country to be able to effectively protect local civilian populations against the daily risk posed by mines and the explosive remnants of war. UNMAS must continue assisting affected countries and facilitating their full access to the delivery of supplies and equipment.

32. The mandate of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories must be supported in order to further raise awareness of illegal Israeli activities and to mobilize international action to end violations of the basic human rights of the Palestinian people. The

unlawful, inhumane and expansionist policies of Israel had denied the Palestinian people their inalienable rights and caused their living conditions to worsen. His country remained steadfast in supporting the Palestinian people in their legitimate resistance against the occupation and in their quest to exercise their right to self-determination and establish a sovereign Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital. Similarly, his country considered the Golan to be an integral part of Syria. All discriminatory and illegal policies towards the Syrian population, the presence of Israeli military bases in and around Syrian civilian areas and the construction and expansion of settlements constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

33. The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirmed the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination in line with General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#) and supported the ongoing negotiations towards achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would allow them to exercise that right. The parties must commit to sustaining the negotiation process within the framework of talks under the aegis of the United Nations, without preconditions and in good faith, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

34. The Committee on Information played a significant role in providing guidance on United Nations policies in the field of communication and public information. The role of Department of Global Communication was also one of great importance, and his delegation welcomed its coverage of measures related to the COVID-19 crisis. However, it was also crucial for the Department to continue raising awareness and disseminating information on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures that affected the capacity of certain countries to respond effectively to the pandemic.

35. The Islamic Republic of Iran supported multilingualism, which helped fulfil the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition to the six official languages of the United Nations, information should also be disseminated in other languages, notably the Persian language, which was spoken by tens of millions of people globally.

36. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative provided an ambitious road map that would yield tangible results. It was essential to comply with the principles of peacekeeping, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence. It was also important to uphold respect for the

principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity of all States and non-intervention in matters within their domestic jurisdiction. His country stood ready to deploy greater numbers of troops, military observers, police and civilians to peacekeeping operations.

37. *Mr. Prvý (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

38. **Mr. Prongthura** (Thailand) said that the peaceful uses of outer space technology could make a substantive contribution to international efforts to build back better after the pandemic, by enhancing the livelihood of all peoples and mitigating the risks of future challenges. Space technology could also help mitigate the effects of climate change and significantly contribute towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International cooperation should be encouraged, whether at the bilateral level or through multilateral frameworks for knowledge and data sharing, technological transfer and capacity-building. All countries should have access to the space-based technologies that facilitated sustainable development. Thailand strongly supported the “Space2030” Agenda and had been working closely with the United Nations Satellite Operations Relay Centre, providing satellite images and analytic maps for disaster relief and management worldwide. It had also participated in regional efforts to collaborate on air pollution management using space-based technologies.

39. Thailand remained committed to its partnership with UNRWA, to which it was a long-standing donor. It had reinforced those contributions by renewing its multi-year pledge, and had recently given \$80,000 to the Agency’s flash appeal. Thailand would continue to support a mutually agreed, peaceful resolution to the conflict based on a two-State solution, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, with a view to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East.

40. As a committed troop- and police-contributing country, Thailand believed that it was essential to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers, especially in view of the ongoing pandemic and the difficult environments in which they worked. Multi-stakeholder collaboration was needed to ensure that all peacekeepers were equipped with the right mindset, knowledge and skills required for their duties. Timely and adequate financial, medical, technological and other resources were also crucial.

41. As a supporter of the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives and a member of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, Thailand was convinced

that, with the consent of host countries, peacekeepers could play an important role as early peacebuilders. The Thai Horizontal Military Engineering Company had contributed to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by establishing a learning centre to share best practices with the local community on agriculture, health care, water and land management.

42. **Mr. Kvalheim** (Norway) said that the ongoing delivery of complex and interdisciplinary mandates by United Nations peacekeeping operations was impressive, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic and the pressure to do more with less. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative had built on previous initiatives to strengthen the capacity of operations to work within an increasingly complex security environment. Nonetheless, peacekeeping operations required continuous adaptation in response to ever-changing realities on the ground. The Secretary-General’s proposal to work towards a new Agenda for Peace was welcome, particularly in light of the emerging threats to collective peace and security.

43. United Nations peace operations must prioritize supporting political processes; attempting to forge peace through military means was unsustainable and entailed an unacceptable human cost. His delegation therefore welcomed the call for collective coherence and a common political strategy in the context of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. The process also required sustained efforts on the part of the Security Council, based on clear proposals from the Secretariat, inputs from the field missions and consultations with neighbouring countries and regional and subregional organizations

44. Protecting civilians was crucial, including during the scaling down of peacekeeping operations. The current situation in Darfur was a stark reminder of the need for vigilance at that stage. It also offered a positive example of how the United Nations could engage with the host country to ensure follow up on protection responsibilities and to build close working relationships with humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations. It was also important to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations. The appointment of Christine Fossen of Norway to lead the police contingent of UNMISS, the second woman in that role, was a welcome step in that direction.

45. Norway welcomed the new partnership announced at the high-level dialogue on energy held in New York on 24 September 2021. Renewable energy could act as an enabler for the United Nations to reach its climate goals and for peace operations to adapt to a security

landscape that was increasingly affected by climate change.

46. Particularly in view of the strains created by the pandemic and the conflict in Gaza, UNRWA continued to be a critical provider of essential services, not to mention an employer, a vehicle for economic activity and a regional stabilizer. The Agency had proved adaptable, using innovative approaches to deliver education and other essential services. Nonetheless, continuous underfunding and lack of financial predictability were a cause for concern. Norway recognized the importance of paying its full core contribution early in the year, and encouraged other donors to do the same. The Agency must be adequately financed and fully operational, as it was the only way to ensure that the essential needs of vulnerable Palestine refugees were met.

47. In the light of the urbanization of warfare and the extensive use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, Norway would continue to defend and promote the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It was one of the world's largest contributors to the efforts to map and clear landmines, cluster munitions and other explosives that continued to cause death and injury long after conflicts had ended. Mine clearance also made a concrete and effective contribution to the safe return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes, as well as to socioeconomic development.

48. His delegation welcomed the adoption of the "Space2030" Agenda, which would help align space activities on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For its part, Norway had provided universal access to satellite monitoring of all tropical forest landmass between latitudes 30° N and 30° S. A better understanding of developments in the rainforests would help to protect such ecosystems and combat climate change. Norway supported the further development of international space law under the stewardship of the United Nations, with a view to ensuring that outer space remained peaceful, safe and sustainable for the benefit of all.

49. **Ms. Low** (Singapore) said that the "Space2030" Agenda and its implementation plan constituted an important milestone in international space cooperation. As a small island State particularly vulnerable to the effects of global warming, Singapore made it a priority to monitor and adapt to the effects of climate change. It had participated in the Space Climate Observatory and was involved in a range of space-related activities, including the design and manufacture of space components and satellite-based services. Singapore also

had a vibrant scientific community engaged in space-related research, including at the Satellite Research Centre of Nanyang Technological University and the Satellite Technology and Research Centre of the National University. In 2020, it had launched a programme to support local and international space technology start-ups. Her country was also interested in forging stronger cooperation with regional and international partners; for example, in 2021, it had signed a letter of intent with the United Arab Emirates Space Agency. Outer space should be preserved as a peaceful global commons, and Singapore supported the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen international space law.

50. In view of the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the rise of non-State actors, her delegation was encouraged by the seven priority areas set out in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. It supported the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, as digitization would help to improve the conduct and monitoring of such operations.

51. 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 had participated in multinational peace initiatives, most recently by assisting with the evacuation efforts in Afghanistan.

52. 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.

53. **Mr. Dvornyk** (Ukraine) said that the ongoing conflicts and the activities of armed and terrorist groups were a cause for alarm, as they continued to increase the scope of areas contaminated by explosives. Ukraine commended the relentless efforts of UNMAS and of all the agencies tasked with increasing security in conflict and post-conflict situations across the five pillars of mine action.

54. The armed aggression led by the Russian Federation had resulted in a drastically increased number of dangerous explosive devices in the occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. His country was working in close cooperation with

international partners on the decontamination and destruction of explosive devices in the liberated areas of those regions. However, comprehensive demining would be possible only after the end of hostilities. The international community should redouble its efforts to assist States in overcoming the lasting consequences of land mines and to press aggressor States to end any indiscriminate use of explosive devices.

55. The Scientific Committee had performed commendably despite the COVID-19 pandemic, but needed sufficient and predictable funding in order to ensure continuity. His delegation encouraged the secretariat of the Scientific Committee to take into account the adoption in Ukraine of a revised system of romanization for geographical names, one example being the spelling “Chornobyl”.

56. COPUOS had always been a unique platform for international cooperation and should never be used to legitimize dialogue with individuals, businesses and officials from States that were aggressors, violated international law and were subject to sanctions. As a consequence of aggression by the Russian Federation, the competent State authorities of Ukraine had lost control of the space facilities located in the Crimean Peninsula, something that constituted a flagrant violation of international law. A new comprehensive legally binding document should be formulated, combining the existing outer space treaties and adding provisions to regulate modern trends in outer space activities.

57. Despite being compelled to defend its own independence and territorial integrity from armed aggression, Ukraine remained an active contributor to peacekeeping activities and continued to promote the women, peace and security agenda. Peacekeeping operations should protect civilians, including by stopping the illegal inflow of weapons and mercenaries, and ensure that their methods kept pace with contemporary challenges. His delegation therefore supported the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and hoped that it would yield tangible results. With regard to strategic force generation, including aviation units, efforts should be made to develop intelligence capacities, reduce the environmental footprint of operations, ensure proper training for personnel, eradicate the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse, and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Furthermore, peacekeeping activities required a tailored approach that took the root causes of conflict into account, particularly in cases of inter-State conflicts.

58. His delegation appreciated the work of the Department of Global Communications, notably in

raising public awareness of COVID-19 and promoting vaccinations, and welcomed the Organization’s efforts to counter disinformation and misinformation, particularly through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 75/267 concerning the Global Media and Information Literacy Week. Nonetheless, a global and systemic approach was required to fully tackle disinformation and fake news, which posed a threat to the values of the United Nations and undermined public safety, peace and security. The deteriorating situation of freedom of expression was deeply concerning, particularly in connection with the work of journalists in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, both in Crimea and Donbas. Ukraine remained committed to further strengthening a safe environment for free media and tackling disinformation and misinformation across United Nations activities.

59. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that UNRWA had been integral to the provision of humanitarian services and development to refugees in the Near East for decades. The disproportionate violence wrought against civilians in East Jerusalem earlier that year had demonstrated a complete disregard for human life and the sanctity of holy sites, and had resulted in significant damage to infrastructure, including to the Agency’s buildings. Adequate supplementary support must be provided to enable UNRWA to continue its operations in the occupied territories, particularly in light of the additional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNRWA was essential to the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

60. Namibia welcomed the strong set of recommendations compiled as part of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative that directly addressed the challenges relating to the barriers to women’s participation in peacekeeping. Those recommendations should be fully implemented by all Member States and United Nations agencies.

61. Given that Namibia itself had long endured the yoke of colonialism, his delegation expressed solidarity with the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The situation in Africa’s last colony, Western Sahara, was of particular concern. MINURSO had been established in 1991 as part of a mutually agreed settlement plan, for the primary purpose of facilitating a referendum. The upcoming renewal of its mandate provided an opportunity to consider how it could yield more meaningful results, particularly in view of the rising tension and ongoing armed conflict. Both sides must honour the provisions of the ceasefire, show restraint and work towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The appointment of a new Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, and of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, should help advance lasting and sustainable peace between the parties in accordance with the United Nations settlement proposals and the relevant resolutions.

62. The stance taken by the United States Congress against the establishment of a United States Consulate in Dakhla was a positive development that underscored the importance of respect for human rights and affirmed a commitment to the right to self-determination in Western Sahara. Similarly, the judgment rendered by the European Court of Justice on 29 September 2021 reflected its understanding of, and support for, the status and territorial sovereignty of the two parties. The Special Committee should undertake a visiting mission to Western Sahara, which would provide a realistic perspective of the situation on the ground. Unresolved issues such as that of Western Sahara were the reason that the relevance of the United Nations was questioned. Similarly, Namibia stood with the people of Mauritius with regard to the advisory opinion delivered on 25 February 2019 by the International Court of Justice concerning the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos archipelago from Mauritius. The position of the Court was clear and must be upheld.

63. **Mr. Fepuleai** (New Zealand) said that Tokelau remained free of COVID-19, and 99 per cent of its eligible inhabitants aged 16 or over were now fully vaccinated against the virus. New Zealand had provided contactless delivery of Pfizer vaccines, virtual training on the administering of vaccines and other remote planning and support, enabling Tokelau to safely run its own rollout programme using local clinical staff on each of its three atolls. The results of such actions stood as a strong testament to a unique partnership: Tokelau was enabled to deliver for itself on its own priorities, with timely and measured support from New Zealand. Plans were under way for vaccines to be delivered in the following months for inhabitants aged 12 to 15.

64. Despite the protection afforded by its remote geography, Tokelau remained vulnerable to the spread of the virus, due to the small size of its atolls, the close-knit nature of its communities and its limited health care capacity. Appropriate border measures and ongoing vaccinations would therefore continue to be features of life in Tokelau for the foreseeable future.

65. New Zealand would continue to work closely with Tokelau to deliver necessities to its people. Key areas of focus included support for coastal resilience, justice sector reform, language maintenance, an upgrade and

expansion of solar energy supply, and delivery of a new submarine cable and inter-atoll connection, while strictly adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. In September 2021, the Southern Cross NEXT cable had been extended to the atoll of Nukunonu, bringing reliable, high-speed Internet access. In the following months, a domestic connection would join the other two atolls to the new cable, bringing increased capacity and opportunity to Tokelau in terms of education, self-governance and international connectivity. Another key area of focus was the planned rollout of the Gardasil 9 brand of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in Tokelau at the request of the Fatupaepae (women's community group).

66. The challenges posed by COVID-19 had only reinforced the resolve of New Zealand to support Tokelau in its efforts to strengthen its capacity for decision-making and self-governance. His delegation welcomed the ongoing interest of the Fourth Committee and would continue to provide timely and accurate information to assist both the Committee and the wider United Nations system.

67. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana) said that all the relevant stakeholders must intensify their efforts to ensure that all the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. Botswana was concerned that the referendum promised by the United Nations to the Sahrawi people had still not taken place. The delay was the result of deliberate obstructive and destabilizing actions, which had been under way since the collapse of the ceasefire in November 2020. The party that bore primary responsibility in the conflict must take the necessary steps to de-escalate hostilities and cease provocative actions in order to allow the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to relaunch the peace process and resume substantive negotiations, whose ultimate objective would be to allow the Sahrawi people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in a free and fair referendum. The re-engagement of the African Union on the matter was a significant step that consolidated its role as a guarantor of the settlement plan brokered by United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

68. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East was a cause for concern, including the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in May 2021, which should be properly investigated to ensure accountability. Botswana supported the Palestinian people and the two-State solution, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law. The liquidity crisis faced by UNRWA threatened the livelihoods of the millions of Palestinian refugees who relied on the

Agency for health, education and food assistance, among other essential services. The international community must do more to ensure the provision of adequate and predictable resources for the Agency.

69. Special political missions played a crucial role in fostering international peace and security. Efforts towards ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups and strengthened partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations would help special political missions to become more adaptable and relevant to the increasingly complex peace and security environment. The University for Peace was instrumental in its work towards conflict resolution, and would continue to rely on both budgetary and non-budgetary support as it broadened its programmes and intensified the dissemination of knowledge in the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.

70. His delegation appreciated the work of the Department of Global Communications and its information centres in communicating multilingual information to a global audience, and in combating disinformation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and providing communications support for the global roll out of vaccines.

71. *Mr. Nayan (Philippines), Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair.*

72. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that the unilateral steps being taken by Israel, the occupying Power, including illegal occupation, expanding settlements, demolitions and displacements were a grim reminder of the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Concerted efforts were required with a view to ending the occupation of Palestine, responding to the illegal acts and holding Israel accountable for its violations of the human rights of Palestinians. Indonesia supported a just, comprehensive and inclusive resolution to the conflict through the two-State solution, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital, based on United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

73. Despite its increasingly critical role, UNRWA continued to run low on resources. The international community must recommit to ensuring sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding to enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate effectively and transparently. Indonesia was strongly committed to providing financial and political support to UNRWA with a view to ensuring that the Palestinian people could live in dignity and reach their full potential.

74. His country remained committed to the decolonization agenda and reaffirmed the need to strengthen focus on the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. Strengthened communications must be combined with an awareness that there was no one-size-fits-all solution and a commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

75. Indonesia firmly supported the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives. It was essential to uphold good conduct and performance in peacekeeping and to support them with adequate resources. Member States should ensure payment of their financial contributions in full, on time and without conditions, and the Secretariat should settle any outstanding reimbursements to the troop- and police-contributing countries without delay.

76. Training and capacity-building were key to improving peacekeeping performance, something that could be achieved by strengthening partnership projects and bilateral and regional frameworks. The Secretariat and Member States must continue to enhance the safety and well-being of peacekeepers, including by giving them access to medical facilities and COVID-19 vaccines. Women peacekeepers could play a key role in enhancing the performance of missions, including through community engagement and the protection of civilians. Efforts must therefore be redoubled to promote the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping at all levels and in all positions.

77. **Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia) said that COPUOS continued to play a crucial role in protecting outer space for the common interest of all humanity and preventing an arms race and the placement of weapons in outer space. Malaysia was in the process of adopting national legislation to regulate space activities, which would help it to fulfil its international obligations. His Government planned to launch new satellites over the following years, and was developing a strategic plan to drive the national space industry towards becoming globally competitive. Malaysia had also worked to strengthen its research and innovation capabilities, including through collaborative activities at the Malaysian Space Agency.

78. 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, and had recently agreed to a long-term contribution from 2021 to 2025. 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. The only viable way forward was a negotiated two-State solution.

79. 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 the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In addition, Malaysia continued to increase the representation of women among its peacekeeping personnel. His Government supported the efforts to ensure that operations were adequately strengthened to meet new demands and challenges, including those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Training and capacity-building, including efforts to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers, were essential to ensuring the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

80. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia) said that all necessary measures should be taken to investigate attacks on United Nations peacekeeping personnel and bring the perpetrators to justice. United Nations peacekeeping activities remained one of the most important means of safeguarding world peace and security, providing humanitarian assistance, helping local governments and communities and advancing social and economic development. However, they could not be implemented without adequate training, resources and modern technology to respond to threats and attacks against peacekeepers. The United Nations Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support had worked commendably to protect the safety of peacekeepers, particularly by providing priority vaccinations for the military and police personnel on the ground.

81. Mongolia supported the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and had sought to contribute to its implementation, particularly with regard to the training and role of military personnel. It recognized the importance of the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Since 2002, Mongolia had participated in over 13

United Nations peacekeeping missions and deployed around 20,000 troops, and intended to continue to enhance and increase its participation.

82. The successful performance of military personnel in peacekeeping operations depended on their comprehensive training and the provision of high-quality modern equipment. Timely reimbursement for troop- and police-contributing countries was also highly important, as it had a significant effect on training and preparation for peacekeeping operations. The Mongolian Armed Forces had been engaging in peacekeeping field training annually since 2006, something that had contributed both to regional peacekeeping capabilities and the performance of peacekeepers.

83. **Mr. Traore** (Mali) said that Mali was both a troop- and police-contributing country and the host country for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The success of peacekeeping operations was the responsibility of all stakeholders, which must coordinate on the ground in order to achieve mission objectives. To that end, and in order to strengthen national ownership, Mali had established a monitoring and coordination mechanism for Mission activities, as part of efforts towards integrated strategic management of the crisis facing the country. It was essential for MINUSMA to adapt to the hostile environment on the ground, which was characterized by indiscriminate asymmetric attacks against civilian populations, Malian defence and security forces and international forces. The Mission must also receive the resources it needed in order to fulfil its mandate and support Mali in combating transnational organized crime.

84. The long-term security and stability of Mali was the responsibility of its own defence and security forces. His Government was therefore working, in collaboration with partners, to strengthen the operational capacity of its forces and ensure that they could protect the people of Mali and secure the entire territory. The transitional authorities were determined to continue implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, with the necessary adjustments to be agreed among the parties, as it was the best mechanism for ending the crisis.

85. Primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lay with the Security Council. His delegation called for predictable and sustainable financing for all United Nations peacekeeping operations located in Africa, as well as for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. He paid tribute to all the victims of the crisis in Mali and the Sahel and

hailed the commitment of the personnel of MINUSMA to bring it to a rapid end.

86. **Mr. Pierre** (Haiti) said peacekeeping operations played an essential role in ensuring the stability and pacification of certain countries, and helped in facilitating the political process, protecting civilians, assisting with disarmament and protecting and promoting human rights.

87. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided that no one could be arbitrarily deprived of their property. Accordingly, in General Assembly resolution [394 \(V\)](#), measures were set out to protect the rights, property and interests of Palestine refugees. His delegation therefore followed the activities of UNRWA closely and with interest. A just, viable and sustainable solution must be reached in the context of Israeli-Palestinian relations, based on the establishment of two sovereign and independent States.

88. Haiti was a fervent defender of the equal rights of all peoples to self-determination, which was the very foundation of the Organization. The practice of colonization was both harmful and perverse. The very fact that the dependency of certain territories on foreign powers was still under discussion was an insult to those who had made enormous sacrifices to eliminate it. The situation would remain unsatisfactory until there were no remaining territories in situations of dependency. Haiti also supported all initiatives towards the claiming of damages for victims of slavery; while it was impossible to erase history, a better future could be created by working together.

89. Special political missions were an essential mechanism for conflict prevention and the promotion of sustainable and inclusive dialogue, human rights and democracy. The main mission of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), whose mandate had recently been extended, was to strengthen political stability and good governance. The presence of BINUH in Haiti was of paramount importance in the search for a sustainable solution to the multidimensional crisis in the country. The Government of Haiti counted on the continued efforts of BINUH to assist its people in emerging from the current vicious cycle of instability. His delegation welcomed the decision taken by the Security Council, in resolution [2600 \(2021\)](#), to request the Secretary-General to conduct an assessment of the mandate of BINUH in order to increase its effectiveness.

90. Over the previous three years, the people of Haiti had faced a host of adverse events, including a rise in insecurity, political instability, the assassination of its President and the earthquake of August 2021. While the Haitian people remained resilient, they required a

realistic, viable and pragmatic political solution with a view to reaching a governability pact. Such a pact would help ensure national stability and combat both violence and poverty. His Government was fully committed to working towards the normalization of politics in Haiti and the regular functioning of democratic institutions. The victims of the current crisis were part of the most disadvantaged social stratum. His Government therefore called for the international community to work towards fostering a climate of peace and trust for the pursuit of constitutional reform and the consolidation of democratic gains.

91. **Ms. Beretta** (Uruguay) said that, 60 years after the General Assembly had called for a rapid and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, the situation of the Malvinas Islands and other colonial outposts persisted. Uruguay reaffirmed its support for 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. The Malvinas Islands were a “special and particular” colonial situation, as recognized in General Assembly resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#) and subsequent resolutions. That situation involved a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom as the only concerned parties, and, consequently, it could be resolved only through bilateral negotiations between the parties. Cooperation and constructive dialogue would enable progress towards a just, peaceful and definitive solution, addressing all aspects of the future of the islands.

92. Uruguay had deployed a total of more than 50,000 troops and police officers around the world. Uruguayan peacekeepers were trained primarily in three fundamental areas, namely the protection of children in armed conflict, the protection of civilians, and the women, peace and security agenda. With regard to the latter, Uruguay was currently finalizing its first national plan of action to help incorporate women in the army, police and peacekeeping missions. The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), in collaboration with Cornell University, had recently conducted a study of the Uruguayan Armed Forces using the Methodology for the Evaluation of Opportunities for Women in Peacekeeping Operations. A similar study of the country’s police force was currently being completed. At the regional level, Uruguay had acted as co-chair of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network in 2020. Such cooperation was both useful and necessary in efforts to bring together diverse actors including States, the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and civil society. The

launching of the Regional Network of Woman Mediators of the Southern Cone also served as a tool to promote greater participation of women in peace negotiations and mediation, in humanitarian crises and in conflict and post-conflict situations.

93. Uruguay welcomed the work of the Department of Global Communications to provide accessible, timely and accurate information about the role of the United Nations in resolving global issues. In particular, the Department must continue its efforts to mainstream multilingualism in all information and communications activities in order to reach as many people as possible. Fluid, objective, trustworthy and transparent communications on the work of the United Nations would strengthen faith in multilateralism and enable the Organization to face global challenges.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

94. **Ms. Shapir Ben Naftaly** (Israel), said that Iran was the main State sponsor of terrorism across the globe, and its revolutionary ideology was aimed at undermining international stability. Its forces and proxies trained terrorists and financed and executed acts of terror all over the world, particularly in the Middle East. With the aim of destroying the State of Israel, the Iranian regime was financing terror in Syria, and acting through Hezbollah in Lebanon and through Hamas in Gaza. The regime also influenced armed militant groups in Iraq and fuelled the Houthi forces in Yemen. The spread of extremism by Iran was blatantly intended to destabilize the entire region.

95. The representative of Iran had mentioned the readiness of his delegation to increase contributions to operations and to deploy military troops for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The existing contributions of Iran and the financing of forces currently deployed in Lebanon and Syria and across the Middle East should be diverted away from supporting terror and towards promoting peace. The list of heinous human rights violations by Iran was endless. It included executions and torture of people on the basis of their sexual identity and political affiliations, and curtailment of freedom of speech for those who opposed the extreme propaganda of the regime.

96. The Iranian regime was propped up by deceit and terror. For over two years, Iran had violated its obligations with regard to nuclear enrichment and stockpiling to such a degree that they had been hollowed of their essence. Iran had also violated its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and continued to develop and disseminate advanced missiles and uncrewed aircraft, fuelling numerous proxy

terrorist organizations. Such actions were causing chaos and threatening the entire Middle East. Iran was the biggest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, rockets, missiles and other related technologies in the world. Meanwhile, the face of the Middle East was changing and Israel was a fundamental player in the growing momentum to foster peace in the region. Rather than being discouraged by such ceaseless attempts to derail progress, the international community should act together to build a new Middle East.

97. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had the audacity to attack her country using the language of human rights, despite speaking on behalf of a government that banned freedom of speech and the right to a fair trial. Furthermore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea blocked the provision of international aid intended to alleviate the suffering of its own people. Rather than criticizing a thriving democracy such as that of Israel, it should create an environment for its citizens to voice their opinions, act freely and report human rights violations.

98. **Mr. Fairlamb** (United Kingdom), replying to the statements made by the representatives of Namibia and Uruguay, said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, which had been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius had never held sovereignty over the archipelago and the United Kingdom did not recognize its claim. However, his country stood by its long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the Territory to Mauritius when it was no longer required for defence purposes. That the matter had been referred to the International Court of Justice was disappointing, as such action ran contrary to the principle that the Court should not consider bilateral disputes without the consent of both States concerned. Nonetheless, the United Kingdom had participated fully in the Court's process at every stage and in good faith. The advisory opinion delivered on 25 February 2019 at the request of the General Assembly was not legally binding and his Government did not share the approach of the Court.

99. The United Kingdom also 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 principle and 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. 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. Argentina should respect those wishes.

100. **Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the representative of the Israeli regime had made baseless and unfounded allegations against his country. The dissemination of false and fabricated accusations against countries of the region, in particular the Islamic Republic of Iran, had long been a standard practice of Israel, the exclusive purpose of which was to conceal its crimes and brutality against innocent Palestinian people. Nevertheless, no amount of disinformation could cover up the criminal nature and expansionist and warmongering policies pursued by that regime over the previous seventy years. Israel continued to violate the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under its occupation, in flagrant violation of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. Palestinians were being deprived of their land and property, forcibly evicted and subjected to violence, terror and intimidation.

101. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination had been completely negated under the slogan of “one Jewish State”. As the international community focused on mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Israeli regime was taking advantage of the current challenging circumstances to accelerate its illegal settlement activities and annexation schemes, further entrenching its military occupation. The inhuman blockade of Gaza continued to deepen the severity of the humanitarian crisis and inflict misery on the Palestinian civilian population living there. Its continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and part of Lebanon and its frequent encroachments on the countries of the region had seriously endangered peace and security in the region and beyond.

102. Israel continued to flout all international regimes governing weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Furthermore, Israel continued to seriously hamper the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as proposed by Iran in 1974. Nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime posed the most serious threat to the security of all States in the

Middle East and to the non-proliferation regime. Nevertheless, Israel attempted to portray the conventional weapons capabilities and exclusively peaceful nuclear programme of Iran as a challenge to regional stability, even though they were under the robust verification of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Doing so was no more than a hypocritical move to detract attention from the real danger posed to regional peace and security by Israel, particularly its nuclear weapon arsenal and its clandestine and unsafeguarded nuclear installation and activities.

103. The entire history of the Israeli regime was full of aggression against its neighbouring and other countries in the Middle East. Given its dark record, attempts by Israel to seek international sympathy and favour were nothing but manipulative propaganda. In light of the threat posed by Israel to regional and international peace and security, as well as its unlawful and brutal measures against Palestinians, the international community must be fully vigilant against all its destabilizing policies and illegal practices in the volatile Middle East region.

104. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina), replying to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the Malvinas Islands, 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 at the meeting of the Special Committee 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. The Special Committee on decolonization had repeatedly adopted resolutions in the same vein, most recently the resolution adopted on 24 June 2021.

105. 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. Consequently, 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.

106. According to the advisory opinion recently adopted by the International Court of Justice concerning the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, it was for the General Assembly to pronounce on the modalities by which the free and genuine will of the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory was expressed, including the formulation of questions submitted for popular consultation. Consequently, a so-called referendum without General Assembly approval would lack legal validity.

107. Moreover, the vote of 2013 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, in the case of the Malvinas Islands, there did not exist 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.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.